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BIBLICAL STUDIES

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PREFACE.

THE papers in the present volume have for the most part appeared in GOOD WORDS or the SUNDAY MAGAZINE. That on "The Authorship of the Book of Job" was printed as an appendix to a volume of sermons, published under the title of THEOLOGY AND LIFE. I have thought it best to reprint them with hardly any alteration. The subjects of some of them would, I need hardly say, have admitted of more elaborate treatment and almost indefinite expansion, but my wish in writing them was to address myself to the wider circle of intelligent readers of the Bible rather than to the narrower circle of scholars, and so to popularise some of the more interesting results of the inquiries to which I had been led.

PLUCKLEY RECTORY, Dec. 28th, 1869.



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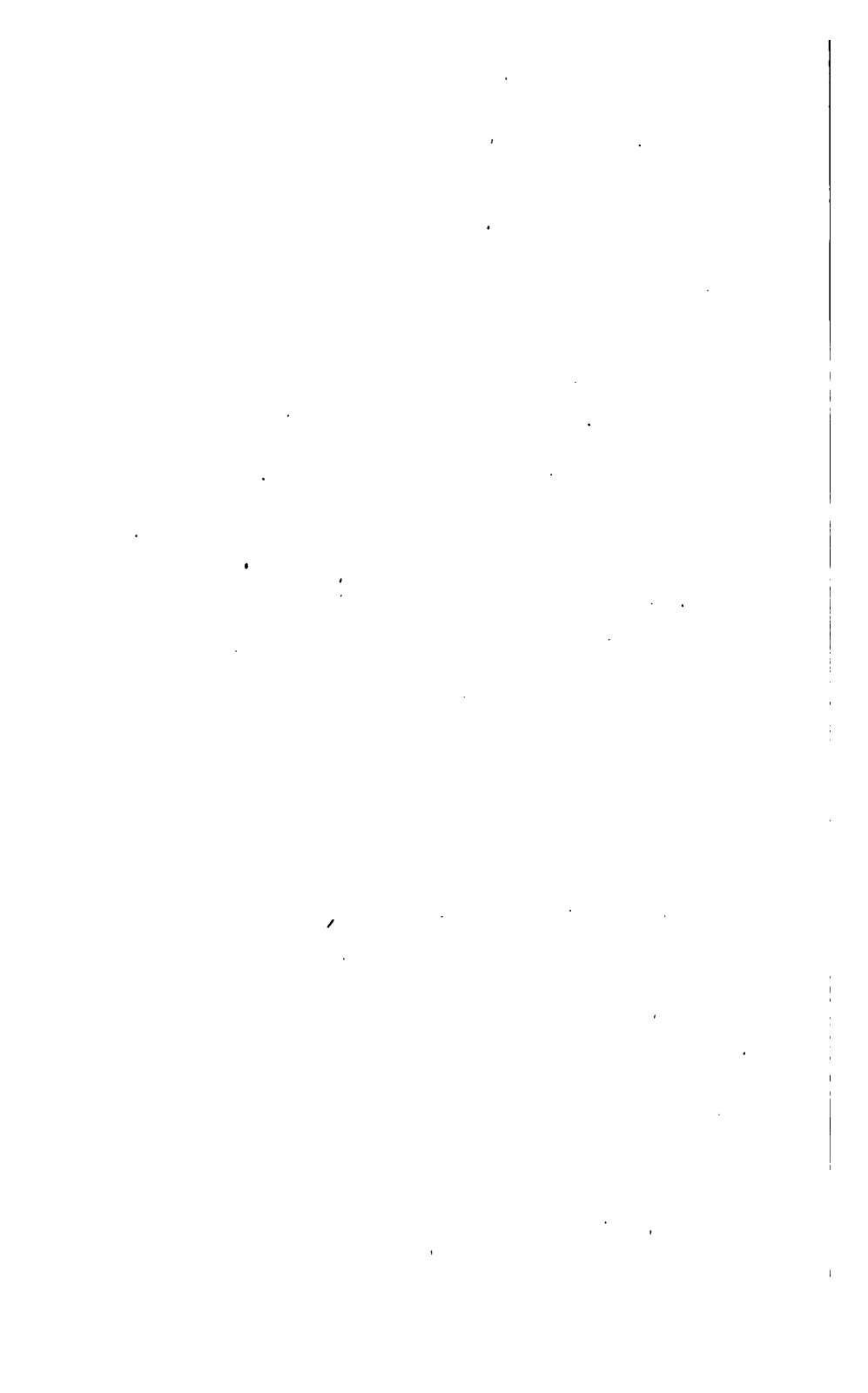
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THE OLD TESTAMENT

B



L

THE LORD OF SABAOTH.

AN inquiry into this as one of the prominent Divine names in the Old Testament has a strong claim on our attention in the fact that it was one of the Hebrew words which, like Amen and Hallelujah and Hosanna, passed in their original form, instead of being translated, into the Greek of the New Testament, and thence into the worship of the Church. In the Latin version of the *Te Deum* it has been made familiar to the whole of Western Christendom. The English version of that hymn in the Prayer-Book has made it a household word to all our countrymen. I know not to what extent Mr. Grove's statement in the "Dictionary of the Bible" (*Art. Sabaoth*) that "it is too often considered to be a synonym of, or to have some connection with, Sabbath, and to express the idea of rest," is based on evidence, but in whatever degree so erroneous an impression prevails, it is well that it should be corrected.* And, lastly, as one of the motives that lead

* Mr. Grove cites three passages from illustrious writers as showing that the mistake was not confined to the illiterate.

(1) Bacon. *Advancement of Learning*, ii. 24.

"Sacred and inspired Divinity, the *Sabaoth* and port of all men's labours and perigrinations."

(2)

me to enter on the inquiry, I am obliged to mention my own dissent from the explanation given to the name in the article just referred to, to which, as occurring in what is now among the highest recog-

- (2) Spenser. *Faery Queen*, canto viii. 2 (The reference is incomplete, and should be *Fragment on Mutabilitie*, canto viii. 2).

"But henceforth all shall rest eternally

With Him that is the God of *Sabaoth* hight:

O that great *Sabaoth* God, grant me that *Sabaoth's* sight."

- (3) Walter Scott. *Ivanhoe*, I., ch. ii.

"A week—aye the space between two *Sabaoths*."

I must question the justice of the inference in each case.

- (1) In the edition of Bacon which I have at hand (the folio of 1753), I find "the *Sabbath* and port," as in an earlier passage of the same book, "the haven and *Sabbath* of all men's contemplations;" and in the Latin of the *De Augmentis*, iii. 1, "Portus et *Sabbatum*." Even if *Sabaoth* be found in the first printed edition, it is more reasonable to look upon it as an error of the press than to suppose that Bacon, whose quotations from Scripture are always made from the Vulgate, was not acquainted with the "*Dominus Exercituum*" of Isaiah vi., or that he was ignorant of so common a word at a time when Hebrew was studied at Cambridge far more than it is now, and many of his fellow-students must have known it.

- (2) The same remark holds good of Spenser. The edition which I have (Pickering's) gives—

"O thou great *Sabaoth* God, grant me that *Sabbath's* sight."

And this is, I am persuaded, the true reading. The two fragments were printed, it must be remembered, posthumously, and if "*Sabaoth*" stands in the first edition, it may very well have been a printer's blunder. But Spenser's thought, with a fantastic pleasure in playing with the similarity of sound, is clearly that of all the "hosts" or armies of God resting after the changes of time in the Sabbath of Eternity. Put *Sabaoth* or *Sabbath* in both clauses of the line, and all the beauty vanishes. Spenser, it should be remembered, had the "hierarchy" of the hosts of Heaven at his fingers' ends, and constantly delights to dwell on it.

- (3) My edition of "*Ivanhoe*" (1824) gives "two Sabbaths."

Here, again, the mistake was, at all events, soon corrected.

It has come under my notice, since the above was in type, that in the controversy between Sir Thomas More and William Tyndale, the translator of the Bible, the former, writing of the seventh day's rest, always calls it "*Sabaoth*," and the latter "*Saboth*." In the latter, who knew Hebrew well, a mistake is out

nised authorities on questions connected with the Bible, most students would naturally turn for guidance. Mr. Grove's conclusion is that "there can be no doubt that in the mouth and mind of an ancient Hebrew *Jehovah Tsebaoth* was the leader and commander of *the armies of the nation*, who 'went forth with them' (Ps. xlv. 9), and led them to certain victory over the worshippers of Baal, Chemosh, Moloch, Ashtaroth, and other false gods." My own conviction, based on the facts to which I now invite the attention of the reader, is that that thought, if it is found at all in the name as used in the Old Testament, is comparatively subordinate, and that it disappears from it altogether as it passes into the terminology of the Christian Church. As constantly happens in such investigations, the inquiry will be found, if I mistake not, to throw light on many of the obscure byeways of Biblical research, and to gather round a word which has hitherto been to many a name with little or no significance, a whole cluster of historical associations.

1. It is on every ground remarkable that the name in question does not occur even once in the Pentateuch, or the Book of Joshua, or in Judges, or in Proverbs, or in Ecclesiastes. In the Books of Samuel, on the other hand, it meets us eleven times; three times only in the two Books of Kings; three times in the two Books of Chronicles; fourteen times in the Psalms. In the prophets it appears with a prominence which, as compared with the

of the question, and the apparent ambiguity in the spelling is probably due to his wish to represent the Hebrew vowel-point by a broader sound than that of our *Sabbath*. I suspect that this bewildered the printers, and, perhaps, misled some scholars. See *Tyndale's Works*, ed. 1860, iii. p. 97.

scantiness of previous usage, is almost startling: sixty-one times in Isaiah; seventy-eight times in Jeremiah; not at all in Daniel; fifteen times in the minor prophets, from Hosea (once only in him) to Zephaniah, inclusive; fourteen times in the two chapters of Haggai; forty-eight times in Zechariah; twenty-five times in the four chapters of Malachi.

2. These numerical results are obviously significant. Those who, like Bishop Colenso, assign a comparatively late date to the writings of the Pentateuch, on the strength of the occurrence in it of the name JEHOVAH, which they assume to have come into use in the time of Samuel, are bound to deal with the problem of the total absence from every one of the five Books of Moses, and also from Joshua and Judges, of a name which was in current use in the days of Samuel, often in the lips of the psalmists who had been trained in the schools of the prophets which he established, often used by the chronicler, obviously all but a contemporary writer, who tells the story of his life. And this absence, we must remember, is all the more remarkable from the fact that it was then, far more than at any later period, that the encampment of the Israelites with the Tabernacle as their centre, embodied the thought which some have connected so closely with the Name, of an unseen King dwelling in that tent, as the Captain of the "hosts" or "armies" of Jehovah. Those again, who, with most German critics, with the school whose most conspicuous representatives are Ewald and Bunsen, assign a still later date to the Book of Deuteronomy, and treat it as the work of Jeremiah, or of his disciple Baruch, or of some unknown scribe in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah, have to explain

how it came to pass that the name which was characteristic of the Josiah period, specially characteristic of the prophet of Anathoth himself, never once appears in the book which they look upon as breathing in every chapter the spirit of that age. Will they contend that the writer who wished to pass the book off as belonging to a remote time, had the critical acuteness to see that the name was of such late introduction that its presence would at once be fatal to the reception of the book as genuine? If so, they must assume a far greater development of critical sagacity than they commonly place to the credit of the scribes of Judah, and then they have to deal with the yet further question, If they saw that the appearance of this one Divine name, the LORD OF SABAOOTH, would be incompatible with the antiquity claimed for the Books of Moses, must we not give some weight to the fact that they saw no such incompatibility in the presence in them of that other name of *JEHOVAH*, on the strength of which they have been ascribed, partly to the time of Samuel, and partly to that of Jeremiah?

3. The argument, as it stands, therefore, is just the converse of that which has been applied with so much force to establish the antiquity of the great mass of materials which we find in the Gospels, as being not the after-growth of the current thoughts and feelings of the apostolic age, but lying in a past definitely behind them. In them there is one name applied to our Lord by Himself—"the Son of Man"—which meets us continually in St. John, as well as in the first three. It is the all but invariable title, rather than Christ or Lord, by which He chooses to describe his relation to mankind. In the

Epistles that name is never so applied. The reverence of the Apostles for the Master whom they believed to have ascended into heaven led them to speak of Him as the Lord, the Lord Jesus, and the like, but never (with the doubtful exception of Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14) as the "Son of Man." And the inference from this is plain and clear. Had the Gospels been "mythical" in their character, had they embodied, that is, the thoughts that were current in the Church, they would have done so in its language. The constant presence in them of a name which had fallen into disuse within a quarter of a century* is a presumptive proof that they belonged in their substance, though not, it may be, in their form, to an earlier period. And so of this name of the LORD OF SABAOth, it holds good, I believe, with nothing to set in the scale against it, that its presence in the later books of the Old Testament canon, and its absence from the Pentateuch and the two historical books that are connected with it, is a strong presumptive proof that they belong in their substance, though not, it may be, in their present form, to a much earlier date.

4. The name of the "LORD OF SABAOth" stands, therefore, at the end of that series of Divine titles which opened, as with the earliest name that meets us in the history of the Bible, with that of ELION or the MOST HIGH GOD. It remains for us to see in what way and with what significance it first came into use. It would seem from 1 Sam. i. 3, 11, to have been in use while the Tabernacle was at Shiloh. It is the name which Hannah used in her prayer.

* Its use by St. Stephen (Acts vii. 56) is, of course, intelligible enough on this hypothesis, and its presence in the narrative becomes there also a proof of authenticity. In Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14, the rendering should probably be "like a son of man."

When the ark is carried forth as a talisman to secure victory against the Philistines, it is as "the ark of the Lord of Hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims" (1 Sam. iv. 4). At first sight, of course, this seems to favour the view from which I have said that I dissent, that Jehovah was thought of as the God of the armies of Israel. It may seem to have come into use with this significance, as Ewald conjectures, under a warlike high-priesthood like that of Eli. The answer of David to the taunting boast of the Philistine giant, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and a spear, and a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts (SABAOOTH), the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Sam. xvii. 45), tends apparently to the same conclusion.

5. Let us look, however, a little more closely into the matter. Assuming, as we are justified in doing, the earlier date of the substance of the Books of Moses, what do we meet with there? In the record of the work of creation in Gen. ii. 1, we find it all gathered up in the words, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the *host* of them." Sun, moon, and stars, the living creatures of God in all their boundless variety, are thought of as one vast army obeying the command of a supreme Controller. That idea was stamped upon the thoughts, and reappeared perpetually in the language, of Israel. Men were warned, as in Deut. iv. 19, xvii. 3, against worshipping these, or "any of the *host* of heaven." When the idolatry of the Chaldeans, closely connected as it was with their astrology, found its way into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, their sin is again and again described as that of bowing down or

offering incense to the "*host* of heaven" (2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3, 5; Jer. xix. 13). So far, therefore, there seems sufficient reason for looking on that meaning as, at least, the starting-point of the associations that gathered round the new name. It was a protest against the worship of the "sun in its strength," and the "moon walking in brightness." It was adopted by devout Israelites at a time when the fascination of that worship came to be the besetting peril of the nation. It rose into a new prominence in proportion as the people came into contact with the Assyrian and Chaldean races, by whom that worship of the heavenly bodies was systematized into a national religion, and was therefore perpetually on the lips of Isaiah and Jeremiah.*

6. There is, it will be admitted, a grandeur in the thought that looked up to the star-spangled firmament, and saw in all the bright multitudes the "host" or army of the King of Heaven. Sometimes, as in the Song of Deborah, this mingled with the feeling that the storms and tempests which were ascribed to their influence came at that King's command. "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judg. v. 20). But soon there mingled with this thought—perhaps

* At a later period we meet with that worship under the name of "Sabaism." Older Oriental scholars, like Pococke, in dealing with a word of unknown origin, adopted the not improbable conjecture that it was derived from *SABA*, the singular of *SABAOTH*, the "hosts of heaven," whom the Sabaites worshipped. The consensus of modern Semitic scholars, Renan, Chwolson, and others, is on the other side, and connects the word with the idea of "baptism" or "ablution." In ecclesiastical history the Sabaites are identified with a Gnostic sect who claimed to be disciples of John the Baptist, and this is received as a more probable explanation of the word. But I cannot say that it seems to me altogether satisfactory.

the two had been, as it were, born together—that besides this visible host there was one of invisible warriors—the guardians of the just, the chastisers of evil-doers, and that these were the rulers of the stars themselves. “The angels of God that did his pleasure” were also his “*host*.” In the vision of Micaiah, the son of Imlah (1 Kings xxii. 19), the prophet saw “the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the *host of heaven* standing by Him on his right hand and on his left.” And these are described as “spirits” (ver. 21). They are clearly identical with those who are called “sons of God” in Job i. 6, and ii. 1. So in Ps. ciii. 20, 21, we have in parallel clauses “Bless the Lord, ye his *angels* Bless the Lord, all ye his *hosts* : ye ministers of his that do his pleasure;” and in Ps. cxlviii. 2, “Praise ye Him, all his *angels* : praise ye Him, all his *hosts*.” And this thought is probably never absent from the word, even where, as in Isaiah and Jeremiah, the first meaning is the more prominent. In the New Testament it supersedes the other. The one angel who announces the Nativity to the “shepherds abiding in the field” is joined by “a multitude of the *heavenly host*.” Our Lord’s words, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve *legions* of angels” (Matt. xxvi. 53), point to the same mode of thought. In the visions of the Apocalypse the “*armies* of heaven” are seen following their great leader “upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean (Rev. xix. 14).

7. It is interesting to note at this stage of our inquiry the equivalents which the two great versions, the Septuagint and the Vulgate, introduced for the Hebrew word, in their endeavour to express

the ideas which thus gathered round it. In the former we meet with a singular variety, sufficient in itself to show that the work was done by different hands, and, in some degree, on different principles. Thus, in 1 Samuel and Isaiah, it is almost always treated as a proper name, and "THE LORD OF SABAOth" appears in the Greek with no indication of its meaning, and so passed into the language of the New Testament, in Rom. ix. 29 and James v. 4. In 2 Samuel, on the other hand, in many passages of Jeremiah, and throughout the minor prophets, we find "*Pantokrator*," the "Almighty," or rather the "All-ruling," to express the sovereignty over all things in the heavens or the earth, which the name implies. In Jeremiah, as a rule, and in some passages of other books, we have "the God of forces," or "powers," while the other Greek versions give the more accurate rendering of "the God of armies." In the Latin, on the other hand, "Sabaoth" appears once, and only once, in the Old Testament, in Jer. xi. 20, and "*Dominus Exercituum*" is the equivalent commonly chosen in the prophets, "*Dominus*," or "*Deus Virtutum*" in the Psalms. The latter is, of course, in the sense with which we are familiar through Milton's line—

"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, *Virtues*, Powers,"

for one of the orders of the heavenly hierarchy.*

8. We are now able to understand in what way the two ideas which have been connected with the name coalesced with that other thought which Mr.

* It may be worth while to note also the equivalents given in the chief modern versions.—(1) Luther, with the fondness for the grand ring of the word shown in his well-known hymn, gives, I believe, invariably, "der Gott Zebaoth." (2) The French gives, "le Dieu des armées." (3) The Italian, "il Signor, or Iddio degli eserciti."

Grove and others look upon as the root-conception of the word. It was part of the spirit of the Theocracy of Israel that men thought of the same supreme King of the visible *host* of heaven, of the invisible *hosts* of the angels, as being also the commander of the armies, or "*hosts*" of Israel. So in words which really distinguish, instead of confounding, the two thoughts, and place them in their right relation to each other, David tells the Philistine that he comes against him "in the name of the LORD OF SABAOTH" (*i.e.*, "the heavenly *hosts*"), the God of the *armies* (lit. the *ranks*), of Israel" (1 Sam. xvii. 45). So, when the king of Syria sends "horses and chariots and a great *host*" to encompass the city in which Elisha had taken refuge, the eyes of the prophet's servant are opened to see a yet greater host, "horses and chariots of fire" round about Elisha (2 Kings vi. 15—17). So in the grand climax of Psalm xxiv. the first answer to the question,—

"Who is the King of Glory?"

speaks of the power of that King as manifested on earth :—

"The Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle."

But the second answer, when the exulting praise reaches its height, is more than a mere repetition of that thought, and speaks of One who sits enthroned in Heaven :—

"Who is the King of Glory?"

The LORD OF HOSTS, He is the King of Glory."

9. The view which I have maintained is confirmed, if I mistake not, by the appearance of another Divine name, not previously used, at the close of the Babylonian captivity, when the exiles of Judah had

come in contact with the Persians. In the decree of Cyrus, as given in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23; Ezra i. 2; in the prayer of Nehemiah, i. 4, 5; ii. 4, 20, we meet with the name of "the GOD OF HEAVEN." It was adopted probably as a common ground between them and the monotheistic Persians, in whom they found so much sympathy, and who worshipped (comp. Herodotus, ii. 131) the "Circle of Heaven" as God, while at the same time it bore its witness to the faith of their Hebrew fathers, and guarded against any abandonment of their belief in the Divine personality. They learnt to speak of "the God of Heaven," just as they had previously, when brought into contact with the Syrian and Chaldean astrology, borne the same protest in the name of the "Lord of Hosts," the "LORD OF SABAOth."

10. The name, like that of the MOST HIGH GOD, seemed to have done its work, and to be on the point of falling into disuse. In one section of the Old Testament it had never appeared, even after it had become familiar in the writings of Psalmists and Prophets. The books in which "Wisdom" is the key-note, and God thought of as the giver of wisdom, leave it entirely on one side. Not one of the three thoughts which it embodied fell in with their more spiritual and ethical conceptions of the Divine nature. It never once appears in the whole series of the Alexandrian books, which we group together as the Apocrypha, and which represent mainly the same tendency. It is absent from the writings of Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, and the great Alexandrian fathers of the Christian Church.* It is never once

* It is right to say that this statement is the result of a general impression as regards Philo and Origen. I write without the oppor-

used in the New Testament, and was never used, I believe, by the Jewish Rabbis as a name of the Messiah.* Once only does St. Paul introduce it, and then only in a quotation from Isaiah (Rom. ix. 29). St. James is the one apostolic writer who employs it in any utterance of his own, and he is led to it, apparently, because for the time his thoughts and his words are like those of the older prophets who had so constantly employed it. As Isaiah in his utterance of "Woe to them that add house to house, that lay field to field" by oppression and wrong, had said, "In mine ears saith the LORD OF Hosts, of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant" (v. 8, 9); as Jeremiah had throughout uttered his predictions of like desolation following on like sins in the name of the LORD OF Hosts; so the Bishop of Jerusalem, in one sense the great representative of the Prophets of the New Testament, as distinct from the Apostles, speaks in the same name. The selfish and the proud are warned that those who have reaped their fields and whom they have robbed of their wages have still the same "LORD OF SABAOth" as their protector and avenger (James v. 4).

11. St. James is, as I have said, the one New Testament writer who employs the name. It is, at least, a noteworthy coincidence that it is through the liturgy which is ascribed to him, and which

tunity of access to full *Indices*. Its absence from Suicer's *Lexicon* is, however, fair evidence of the infrequency of its use by the Greek Fathers.

* It is mentioned by Schöttgen (*Hor. Hebr.* ii. p. 9) in his exhaustive *Treatise De Messia*, as occurring once in the Book *Sohar*. But that book represents a terminology far later than that of the "Talmud."

undoubtedly represents the usage of the Eastern Churches from a very early period, that it passed into the devotional language of Christendom. In the *Ter Sanctus* which is found there, as in every other ancient Communion Office, this word meets us, as in our *Te Deum*. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth" as the hymn of the cherubim of Isaiah vi. And the words which precede it expand the thought which it embodies with great fulness, as including "the heaven and the heaven of heavens, and all their host; sun and moon, and all the band of stars; earth, and sea, and all that is therein; the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and Church of the first-born that are written in heaven; the spirits of just men and prophets, the souls of martyrs and prophets, angels, archangels, thrones, principalities, dominations, authorities, and dread powers, the many-eyed cherubim, and the six-winged seraphim." From the Liturgies of the East it passed to those of the West, and though the Vulgate in its translation of Isaiah vi. had given "*Dominus Exercituum*," the *Ter Sanctus* of the Latin Church has always had, as if from an independent source, the "*Dominus Deus Sabaoth*." Thence it was taken up, probably in the fifth century, into the *Te Deum*, and so like Hosanna, and Hallelujah, passed into the common speech of men. When the Latin Offices of the English Church were translated at the time of the Reformation, it appeared unaltered in the *Te Deum*, while in the Communion Office, with the inconsistency which sometimes characterizes the work of the compilers of the Prayer-Book in these matters, it was brought into harmony with the translation of the Bible, and appeared as "the Lord of Hosts."

II.

“THE MOST HIGH GOD.”



HERE is, if I mistake not, an interest of a peculiar nature, whether we look at the matter historically or spiritually, connected with this as one of the Divine names which come to us through the Bible. If it does not stand on the same lofty eminence as that of *Jah* (Ps. lxviii. 4) or *Jahveh* (or, as we more commonly write it, *Jehovah*), as being the incommunicable Name, representing the eternal, self-originated Being of the I AM THAT I AM (Exod. iii. 14),—if it is not brought into the same direct contrast with that Name as being an earlier and less complete apocalypse of the Divine nature, like *El Shaddai*, the “God Almighty” (Exod. vi. 3), we shall find that it has a wider range than either, and has passed through more varied and more strange vicissitudes. If it does not connect itself, as the word which we translate “God” (with its strangely plural form, *Elohim*) does, with intricate questions as to the authorship of books or portions of books, according as that Name or *Jehovah* predominates in either, its history may perhaps throw an unexpected light upon those questions, and help us to understand the relation of those two Names to each other, and to this as, in one sense, intermediate between them.

1. We have to note, as the first memorable fact in tracing the history of the Name into which we are inquiring, the comparative infrequency of its occurrence. It does not appear once in the whole series of what we commonly call the Historical Books of the Old Testament, from Joshua to Esther.* It meets us only in three chapters of the Pentateuch (Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, 22, Num. xxiv. 16, Deut. xxxii. 18). The writers of the Psalms, in the jubilant devotion which led them, as it leads poets of all periods and nations, to delight in bringing together every Divine name that was not irretrievably tainted by idolatrous associations, brought it more often into the songs of Zion; and we can reckon up not fewer than twenty-two passages in which the word occurs, scattered through seventeen Psalms. From the prophets of Israel it is almost as entirely absent as from the writers of its history (probably both writings came from the same class of men), and the name of the "Most High" meets us but once in Isaiah (xiv. 14), and twice in the Lamentations of Jeremiah (iii. 35, 38). It is one of the characteristics of the prophecy of Daniel, however, whatever explanation may be given of it, that in this respect he differs from his predecessors; and in two chapters of the book that bears his name, it occurs in a plural form, but with a singular meaning, not less than eight times (ch. iv. 21, 22, 29, 31; vii. 18, 22, 25, 27). When we come to the writings of the so-called Apocrypha, on the other hand, there is a marked increase in its frequency. It has come to be, next to "the Lord," the favourite Name by which the son of Sirach speaks of God, and we find its

* 2 Sam. xxii. 14 is only an apparent exception, as it there occurs, not in the narrative, but in a transcript of Ps. xviii.

Greek equivalent in as many as forty passages in the Book of Ecclesiasticus alone. If that book was, as it professes to be, a translation from the Hebrew (*i.e.*, from the Aramaic form of it then spoken in Palestine), this would show that the Name which appears so seldom in the Old Testament had for some reason or other become popular after the return from Babylon. In the New Testament it falls once again into the background. We have it twice in the message of Gabriel to the Virgin (Luke i. 32, 35); once in the song of Zacharias, the father of the Baptist (Luke i. 76); thrice as uttered by demoniacs (Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 38; Acts xvi. 17); once in a quotation about Melchizedek from Gen. xiv., in Heb. vii. 1; once in St. Stephen's speech (Acts vii. 48). These are the facts with which we have to deal. I proceed to inquire to what inferences they lead us.

2. And, first, as to the name itself, which in the Hebrew has the form *Elion*. The English reader must not be misled by the apparent resemblance of the word thus written to the other Divine names of *El* or *Elohim*. The initial vowels, identical as we write them, are in the Hebrew entirely distinct, and are seldom, if ever, interchanged. There is no connection traceable or even possible between the two words. The meaning of the name is clear enough, and is rightly rendered in the Greek, Latin, English, and other versions of the Old Testament, as "the Highest," or the "Most High." The same word is found in its lower, simply local sense quite often enough (as in Gen. xl. 17; 1 Chron. vii. 24; 2 Chron. viii. 5) to make its meaning clear. It expresses, therefore, that earliest thought of God which rises in the mind of man as he looks upwards to the firma-

ment of heaven, and is led to believe in One on high, *above* him in the infinite distance, *above* him and all created things in the infinite perfection of his nature. He worships the "*Most High*." If he is led to connect that thought with the idea of a single, sovereign Power acting upon him and upon the world, if he is not led first to personify and then to deify the several forms of force which meet him in the world around him, he will be true to the monotheistic instincts of his nature. If he yields to that temptation, it will still remain to bear its witness of One who sits supreme over all gods and men.

3. The history which first brings the name before us is that remarkable episode in the history of Abraham which tells us of the attack of the five kings from Mesopotamia, sweeping away many of the old tribes of Canaan, plundering the Cities of the Plain, and carrying off their spoil; of their defeat by Abraham and the warriors whom he led in pursuit of the retreating marauders. On his return to Mamre, he is met at Salem (I leave the vexed question of its locality untouched) by "*Melchizedek the priest of the Most High God*" (*El Elyon*). The description is obviously one on which great stress is laid; and it is accompanied by another formula hardly less significant. When Melchizedek blesses Abraham it is in the name "*of the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth*." And Abraham, the history tells us, recognised at once the priesthood of Melchizedek and the name of the Divine Being whom he worshipped. He, too (here and here only in his life), when he solemnly refuses to take any part of the recovered spoil, says to the king of Sodom, that

he has "lifted up his hands to the *Most High God*, the possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. xiv. 22).

4. Whatever view we take of the chapter in which this narrative occurs, whether we adopt the very probable hypothesis that the compiler of the Book of Genesis has incorporated with his tale of the patriarchal family, a section of some lost chronicle of a wider history, or take it as written by the same author as the rest of the book,—whatever view we take of the priest who is thus brought before us, and whose name afterwards gains so mysterious a significance—it is, at all events, clear that he represents a worship and a faith common to Abraham and to the earliest inhabitants of the East. The patriarch who had left Ur of the Chaldees because he had borne a vain protest against the religious corruptions which were taking root there, finds in "the Most High God," to whose service Melchizedek had consecrated himself, One whom he too can worship, and pays tithes to him of the spoil. The ritual seems to have been of the simplest type, free from the horrors of human sacrifice, not needing even the symbolism of the sacrifice of animals. The priest and the worshipper partook of bread and wine which had been blest and offered, in token that their life was God's, derived from Him, sustained by Him.

5. The inference that the name into which we are now inquiring belonged to the earlier Canaanites, is confirmed by the fact that it reappears in the religion of the people who represented that race in later history. The Phœnicians, we are told, among the gods of their later system, worshipped a god or hero named *Ehion*.* The name itself appears as late as

* Euseb. *Præp. Evang.*, i. 10.

the time of Plautus, in the oaths of the Carthaginians, who derived their language and their religion from Tyre and Sidon.* It is at least singular that the only Greek poet who uses "the Most High" as an epithet of the Olympian Zeus, is Pindar,† the Boeotian, in singing the praises of that god as he was worshipped at Thebes, the city which mythically traced its origin to Cadmus the Phœnician, and which clearly had some connection historically with those men of the East, of whom his name ("the Eastern") made him the representative.

6. The name which we are discussing meets us for the second time in the Book of Numbers; and it is noticeable that there too it comes, as it were, from without. It is not an Israelite name for God, but comes from the lips of Balaam, the son of Beor. In that lofty utterance, in which he seems to bring together every one of the great thoughts of God, which were the inheritance not of Israel only, but of the whole Semitic race, he describes himself as the Seer, the "man whose eyes were opened," "which heard the word of God (*El*), and knew the knowledge of the *Most High* (*Elion*), and saw the vision of the Almighty (*Shaddai*)" (Num. xxiv. 16). And the prophet who thus spoke came, let us remember, from "Pethor, by the river of the land of the children of his people;" from Aram (Syria, in its widest extent, including the plains of Mesopotamia), "out of the mountains of the East" (Num. xxii. 5; xxiii. 7). He belonged, that is, to the region from which Abraham had started on his religious emigration. He was the prophetic representative of that widespread primeval faith, of which we have seen the

* Plautus, *Pœn.*, v. i. 1.

† Pindar. *Nem.*, i. 90; xi. 2.

kingly and the priestly representative in Melchizedek ; and of that faith the name of *the Most High God* was still the accepted symbol.

7. Once more, and once more only, does the name meet us in the Pentateuch, and that is in the Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy xxxii. 8. I do not enter now into the questions that have been raised as to the date and authorship of that book. The point with which we are now concerned may be discussed quite independently of them. What we have to note is that, in this solitary passage, where we find it as coming from the lips of Moses himself, it connects itself with the thought of a wider, more universal kingdom than that which was embodied in the theocracy of Israel. "When *the Most High* divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the portion of *Jehovah* is his people : Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." The words assert a truth which the children of Israel were constantly in danger of forgetting, the truth that God was not their God only ; that the Gentiles also might claim a fellowship in the blessedness of his kingdom, even though He had chosen Jacob for special and peculiar blessings. The Song of Moses proclaims what St. Paul preached when he stood on Mars' Hill at Athens, and told those who, in their scorn for all barbarians, were as arrogant and exclusive as the Jews, that "God had made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and had determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xvii. 26). The Lawgiver and the Apostle bore their witness to the

truth that the same Lord ordered the course of the world's history and the history of Israel; that the distinctions of race, country, climate, were not arbitrary and capricious, but had their root in the Divine will, and were subservient to a Divine purpose. And the name which is chosen as the fittest expression of that truth is that which we have already found in connection with the wider patriarchal faith which was before Abraham, and which the Father of the Faithful recognised.

8. The entire absence of the name from the whole group of what we commonly speak of as the historical books of the Old Testament is a fact which cannot be passed over in silence. It indicates at once the spirit in which they wrote, and the limits which, consciously or unconsciously, they set before themselves in the task they had undertaken. They were *not* writing an universal history, tracing the working of a Divine purpose in the disorders and confusions of the world, recognising the education of mankind. They *were* writing a history of God's dealing with his people Israel, of the relations in which they, kings, priests, and people, stood to the Lord (*Jehovah*) their God. In such a history it was natural and right that they should dwell upon the name which bore witness of the covenant which God had made with their fathers rather than on that which had no such special significance.

9. The same explanation applies to the like absence of the name of the "Most High God," with a few exceptions, so striking that they prove the rule, from the writings of the prophets. For they too represented the religious life of Israel as a chosen and peculiar people. They spoke as the word of

Jehovah came to them ; they were the servants of the Lord of Hosts (*Jehovah Sabaoth*), and they spoke in his name. Wherever we meet with an exception to this law, there is discernible some point of contact with the religion of the nations round them. In Isa. xiv. 14 the name is put into the lips of the king of Babylon. He it is who says in the pride of his heart—"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds : I will be *like the Most High*." The worship of *Ehion*, which had been recognised by the Father of the Faithful, who had started from Ur of the Chaldees, is recognised still by the king, who appears as representing the same race at their highest point of development. It is not till we come to a prophet who had found in the Chaldean conqueror a truer servant of God than the king of Judah, and to whom it was given to see with some distinctness the vision of a wider church than that of Israel, that the name which had been used by Melchizedek and Moses and Balaam, appears in prophetic language. When Jeremiah spoke in his "Lamentations" of the Lord, who "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," when, with special reference to the ambition and the cruelty of the Chaldean king, he proclaimed that "to turn aside the right of a man before the face of *the Most High*, the Lord approveth not" (Lam. iii. 35), and asked, as asserting his far-reaching Providence, the sovereignty that extended over all the earth—"Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord approveth not ? Out of the mouth of *the Most High* proceedeth not evil and good" (iii. 38). And if this were the case with one who came into contact with the Chaldeans, and so was led to use the name which proved a bond

of union between them and Israel, we need not wonder that in a book like that of Daniel, in which the Chaldean influence is so clearly traceable, we should meet with it again. But with him too it is the symbol of the sovereignty of God as the ruler of the nations. He sees that Nebuchadnezzar's vision has been sent to him "to the intent that the living may know that *the Most High* ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. iv. 17); that the decrees that come from kings and rulers come from Him (iv. 24); that He, as by the supreme authority which that name expresses, "giveth the kingdom to whomsoever He will" (iv. 32). It is in that name that the king of Babylon worships Him, when he has been taught the lesson which he needed, as One who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth" (iv. 35). Still more striking is the manner in which the name mingles with the Prophet's visions of the Messianic kingdom in that chapter which, more than any other, determined the form and language of the men of a later generation. In the self-same vision in which he saw "one like the Son of man brought to the Ancient of days," to take possession of "dominions and glory and a kingdom, and that all people, nations, and languages should serve him" (Dan. vii. 14), he sees also the "saints of *the Most High*" as sharing in that dominion, suffering for the truth, winning at last their victory (vii. 18, 22, 25, 27). Still, as before, universality is the main thought associated with the Name.

10. In the Psalms, in which, as we have seen, the name occurs with far greater frequency, there does not seem to be any well-defined law governing its use. The tendency of all hymnic writing is to

greater freedom and less precision in such matters. Each Divine name is brought in as it is suggested by laws of rhythm, or subtle sense of harmony, or associations which we cannot trace, or the love of variety, or the desire to bring in all names that can set forth the majesty of Him whom we are praising. So far as we can recognise any principle as acted on, consciously or unconsciously, by the writers of the Psalms, it is as before, that of using it when the wider sovereignty, the universal providence of God, is what they have in view. It comes at the close of an appeal to the righteousness of God (Ps. vii. 17); at the opening of a hymn of victory over the heathen nations, a victory given by one who "shall judge the world in righteousness" (Ps. ix. 2); as part of the greatness of Him who makes darkness his secret place, and utters his voice in the thunder (Ps. xviii. 13); as the ground of confidence and hope, for the true king who "trusteth in Jehovah, and in the mercy of the *Most High*, shall not miscarry" (Ps. xxi. 7). When he utters the cry, "Be merciful unto me, O God; be merciful unto me," it is unto "*God most High*" that David turns for deliverance (Ps. lxxvii. 2). In the interesting group of Psalms which are assigned to the sons of Korah, characterized as they are throughout by this widening sense of catholicity,* we find the Name used with the same significance. In the midst of all terrors and confusions, the Psalmist remembers that "there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the *Most High*" (Ps. xlvii. 4). When hope is changed to exultation,

* I may refer the reader to the "Study" on these Psalms, in the present volume.

and men "shout unto God with the voice of triumph," he adds that "the Lord Most High" (*Jehovah Elion*) "is terrible, King over all the earth," reigning over the heathen (Ps. xlvii. 2). When there is opened to the mind of the Psalmist (suggested by the actual admission of many proselytes from alien races) the visions of a time when Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia, shall come within the fellowship of the covenant, and send their sons to be enrolled as citizens of Zion, it is with the thought that "*the Most High*" ("the highest," Authorised Version) "shall stablish her" (Ps. lxxxvii. 5). It is characteristic of another group of Psalms, those which bear the name of Asaph, that they, dealing, as they do, with the wider aspects of the moral government of the world, give a special prominence to the name which forms the subject of this inquiry. When men are perplexed with the seeming anomalies of that government, they are led to utter their doubt in the question, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in *the Most High*?" (Ps. lxxiii. 11;) or they meet that doubt and despondency with the reflection, "This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of *the Most High*" (Ps. lxxvii. 10). They confess that the sin of the people has been that "they have tempted the *Most High God*, and kept not his testimony" (Ps. lxxviii. 56). Once again, when their thoughts turn to the oppression and wrong which prevail among the princes and rulers of the nation, they remind them that they are representatives of God, that that very name may be predicated of them, "I have said, ye are gods, and ye are all the children of *the Most High*" (Ps. lxxxii. 6), children of Him whose attributes of truth and

righteousness, as the Supreme Ruler of men, they theoretically embodied and practically set at nought. When from these they turn to the heathen nations that at some period had entered into a great confederacy against Israel, "Edom, and Ishmael, and Moab, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines with them that dwell at Tyre," it is with the assurance that they too shall at last confess that He "whose name alone is Jehovah, is *the Most High* over all the earth" (Ps. lxxxiii. 18). Lastly, in the Psalms which are, as to their authorship, anonymous, the name meets us in one or two interesting combinations. In that which gathers up all the fullest expressions of trust in the government of God, the writer opens his song of praise with proclaiming that "he that dwelleth in the secret place of *the Most High* shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. xci. 1), the two names of which belonged to the patriarchal religion, *Elion* and *Shaddai* being thus brought together, and united, in the verse that follows, with that of Jehovah, which specially characterizes the covenant of Moses. A like union meets in the psalm that follows, where we are told "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord" (*Jehovah*), "and to sing praise unto thy name, O *Most High*" (Ps. xcii. 1). In the great hymn of the Providence of God, which opens with the call to "give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever," the sin which has brought men into darkness and the shadow of death, is that they have "rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsels of *the Most High*" (Ps. cvii. 11).

11. We are now able to see how it was that the

name which occurred comparatively seldom in the canonical books of the Old Testament appears with such frequency in the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, better known as Ecclesiasticus. In part, doubtless, this may be traced to the influence of the prophecies of Daniel, and the prominence given to it there. But in part also, if I mistake not, we may recognise the feeling that it was one of the names which the Greeks, with whom the Alexandrian Jews came in contact, could best understand, and were most likely to reverence. It bore witness even in the poets of the Greeks to the primeval faith in the Divine Unity. It was a bond of union between them and those who had kept that faith, or had it restored to them in a new strength and purity. Greece, Syria, Persia, Babylon, Alexandria, could all join with Jerusalem in their worship of the "*Most High*."*

12. So introduced and sanctioned, the name would seem to have passed into common use wherever the Jews were brought into contact with the Greek-speaking nations of the Roman Empire. And this accounts clearly enough for the remarkable fact already noticed, that it meets us in the Gospels and the Acts as coming from the lips of demoniacs. It entered, *i.e.*, into the formulæ used by the "vagabond Jews, exorcists," who undertook to cast out evil spirits, and who swarmed over the whole East. It was *the* name which they were most likely to employ, which addressed itself to Jew and Greek, and

* So in the decrees of Cyrus (Ezra i. 21) and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 37) we find the names "God of Heaven," or "King of Heaven," chosen as terms common to the two races. This also seems a revival of the old title which meets us in the history of Melchizedek—"the possessor of heaven and earth."

commanded the reverence of both. And so it was the Divine name which dwelt most in the memory of those unhappy persons; and when they came in contact with One whom they recognised with a supernatural insight as having power to heal, they cried out to him as the "Son of *the Most High God*." So also when the "possessed" girl, with "a spirit of divination," listened to the preaching of the Apostles at Philippi, she bursts forth into the repeated cry, "These men are the servants of *the Most High God*, which show unto us the way of salvation" (Acts xvi. 17).*

13. The last incident in the history of the word is at once singular and interesting. Among the rank growth of heresies which the Fathers and historians of the fourth century delighted to chronicle and catalogue, we find a sect that claimed the title of *Hypsistarii*,† or worshippers of *the Most High*. They seem to have aimed at a kind of eclectic religion, uniting some of the features of Judaism with those of other Eastern monotheists; and, true to the traditional associations of the Name, they chose this as their watchword. They rejected circumcision on the one hand, and on the other kept the Sabbath rigorously; while, in their desire to conciliate the worshippers of Mithras, they adored the sun and fire as symbols of the Godhead. But that in which they exulted was that they were true to the primeval faith of the earliest patriarchs, to the precepts of the sons

* I have already called attention to my paper on "St. Paul and the Sisterhood of Philippi," in the SUNDAY MAGAZINE for July, 1868, to the probability of Jewish influence being traceable in this instance also.

† Comp. Suicer, Hesychius, Suidas, s. v. ὑψισταπίος. Greg. Naz. Orat. 19; Greg. Nyss. Or. ii. c. Eunom.

of Noah, worshippers, as Melchizedek had once been, of the *Most High God*.*

14. All that remains is to sum up briefly the results to which the inquiry has led us as to the chief Divine names that meet us in the Old Testament. (1) As the earliest of all, the lowest stratum in the language deposits of the religious history of the Semitic races, we have the name *El* (= God) as seen in *Beth-el*, *El-Shaddai*, *Isra-el*, *Samu-el*, and the like. It indicates in its singular form that the primary conception is that of unity. It is the witness of a monotheistic faith. The original idea which it expresses is that of strength. That idea is intensified in the name *El-Shaddai*, "God Almighty." It is connected with the thought of an infinite elevation above man, and earth, and the things of time, in *El-Elion*, "the Most High God." If there is any traceable distinction in the use of these two names, it is that the former belongs specially to Abraham and his descendants, that the latter is common to them and to the tribes from which they had been called to be a peculiar people, a "congregation," an *ecclesia*. (2) In some way, we know not how, the more common mode of using the name *El* came to be in the plural form *Elohim*. It may be, as Christian theologians have for the most part maintained, that this implied the presence in the Divine nature of a plurality mysteriously compatible with unity. It may be, as Mr. Max Müller has suggested, that *Elohim* originated in the growth of a polytheistic

* An inscription found at Palmyra has been brought to my notice by my friend, Dr. Deutsch, of the British Museum, which indicates the same kind of eclectic monotheism. It belongs to the time of Aurelian, and is a dedication to "Zeus, Most High, the wielder of the thunder" (*Δὴ ὑπερίστω κεραυνίῳ*).

tendency among the Semitic as among the other races of mankind. In either case, when taken up by the children of Abraham, and combined with language which unmistakably asserted the Divine unity, it testified that He who was so named united within himself all that men had imagined as belonging to the "gods many and lords many" before whom they bowed in worship. But the fact that it primarily expressed plurality rather than unity led naturally enough to a lower application of the name. It was given to the earthly representatives of the Divine government, as well as to the Divine King himself. It was written of to the judges and rulers of Israel, "I have said ye are Gods" (*Elohim*), "and all of you are children of the Most High" (Ps. lxxxii. 6). When the Israelites met at a time of danger, looking for new leaders, it is said of them that "they chose new Gods" (*Elohim*) (Jud. v. 8). The name was applied in common prose narrative (as in Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9, 28) to those whom our Authorised Version calls "judges." (3) Such a name was, therefore, in danger of losing its power to bear witness to the unity of God. It did not direct men to the thought of God as the eternal, the ever-living, the source of all life to men. What met their want was found in *Jah* or *Jahceh*, or *Jehovah*, from the time when it was revealed to Moses as expressing the truth which in its more expanded form appeared in the I AM THAT I AM. Once adopted (and its appearance in the Song of Debórah, Jud. v. *passim*, with all its manifestly local and contemporary touches, is a proof that it was in use then, and not, as has been maintained, an after-thought of the days of Samuel), it became, naturally enough, the

distinctive name of the faith of Israel. In the combination of *Jehovah-Sabaoth*, "the Lord of Hosts," it testified of Him as the God of the armies of Israel, the giver of victory in battle, as the God of the unseen hosts of the stars of heaven and of the angels that serve Him. Used in combination with *Elohim* ("the Lord God") or interchangeably with it in successive verses of the same chapter or the same hymn; it rescued that name from any downward tendency, and enabled men to use it even by itself, as old associations or rhythmic influences might lead them, without any risk of weakening the faith of the people in the indivisible Unity, with no more definite dogmatic purpose, it may be, than Christians have when they speak in sermons or hymns or meditations, of "God" and "the Lord," indiscriminately. The relation of the two titles was fixed for ever by the proclamation, "The Lord thy God is one Lord;" "*Jehovah* thy *Elohim* is one *Jehovah*" (Deut. vi. 4). (4) But, meantime, the older, primeval name of the *Most High God* kept its ground even amid the debasing polytheism of the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and other sections of the Semitic race. When the Jews came in contact with them, or with the Greeks, to whom the name had passed through their instrumentality, or among whom it had sprung into use through the parallelism of thought which the history of the religions of the world so often presents, even where there is no traceable derivation, they were able to claim it as their inheritance, and to take it as a common ground on which both alike could stand. (5) It may seem strange at first that the preachers of the new faith, which was in the fullest sense that of a universal fellowship, they who

proclaimed a covenant identical in its terms and conditions with that made with Abraham, should have made so little use of a name which might have seemed at first so suitable for their purpose; but the causes of their thus leaving it to drop into comparative disuse are not, I believe, far to seek. Its very prevalence in the days of the decadence of Judaism had rendered it less fit to be the vehicle of the truth they preached. It had been tainted, so to speak, by passing from the lips of exorcists and demoniacs; and at the best it would only have conveyed the thought that the faith which the Apostles preached was simply a revival of the religion of the patriarchs. It might have led, as with the heretics above referred to, to a hybrid, half-Jewish, half-Oriental system. It seemed only, when men looked to its significance, to express the infinite distance between man and God. Another name had been given to them, which expressed, not the distance, but the nearness, the clearness of the relation in which He had revealed Himself as standing to the children of men. The name of *the Most High God* was to yield, in the prayers and praises of the Christian Church, to that of "Our Father which is in heaven," "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

III.

SHILOH—IMMANUEL—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.



THESE three names are familiar to us as connected, in varying degrees of closeness, with our thoughts of Christ. They are found in passages which are commonly cited as prophecies fulfilled in Him. And each of them, in the circumstances in which it took its rise, in the conflicting interpretations which have gathered round it, has a history worth studying for its own sake by all who care for truth and accuracy in their knowledge of the words of Scripture, sure to lead us, I believe, if we follow its guidance faithfully, to a fuller and clearer faith.

I. SHILOH. The word, as associated with what are called Messianic predictions, meets us in one passage only. In the prophetic benedictions which we read in Genesis xlix., as spoken by the patriarch Jacob before his death, we find him speaking thus of Judah. I quote, of course, from the Authorised Version :—

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise;
Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies;
Thy father's children shall bow down before thee.
Judah is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, thou art gone up;
He stooped down, he couched as a lion,
And as an old lion; who shall stir him up?

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the
gathering of the people be."

The current interpretation of the words is simple enough. Shiloh is accepted, with more or less uncertainty as to its meaning, as a name of the Messiah. The prophecy was fulfilled in the appearance of Jesus as the Christ at the time when the "sceptre" and the "lawgiver" had indeed departed from Judah by the transfer of sovereignty to the Idumæan Herod, and afterwards to the Roman emperor. In the words, "We have no king but Cæsar," men have found the confession that the "sceptre" was, in very truth, no longer theirs.

It may give us greater freedom in dealing with the explanation thus offered to remember that it is entirely traditional. No apostle or evangelist has set his seal to it, or sanctioned it even by indirect allusion. Be it accurate or inaccurate, we are dealing only with the meaning which critics of this or that school have found in difficult and perplexing words. There need be no shock given to any reader's faith, if he finds that that meaning does not meet the requirements of the passage.

And the difficulties connected with the received interpretation are not slight. (1) It can hardly be said that the "sceptre" had not "departed" from Judah till the time of our Lord's birth. On any fair interpretation of history its sovereignty had ceased at the commencement of the captivity. On the return of the Jews they were governed by Persian satraps, then by Syrian and Egyptian kings, then by rulers of their own (who were, however, of the tribe of Levi, not of Judah), lastly by the



dynasty of the Herods. (2) Nowhere throughout the whole of the Old Testament is the prediction referred to as pointing to the Anointed King. No psalmist or prophet, however fully he may dwell on the greatness of the house of David, or project his hopes into the distant future in which he sees a "rod out of the stem of Jesse," ever alludes to this as the ground of his expectations. If the prophecy had been in this sense directly Messianic, it would surely have left some traces of itself in the prophetic speech of those who followed, or in popular traditions. (3) And the name itself, wherever else it occurs, is, as its very form might lead a Hebrew scholar to expect, the name of a place and not a person. It was at *Shiloh* that the tabernacle was set up after the conquest of Canaan. There during the whole period of the Judges it remained, and men went to *Shiloh* for the annual festivals and at other periods of great national gatherings. Long after the ark had ceased to be its glory, and the tabernacle itself had been removed to Gibeon, after it had become a by-word for a deserted sanctuary, it still retained a savour, as it were, of its former greatness. It was the residence of the Prophet Ahijah (1 Kings xi. 29), and of the devout pilgrims who were going to the ruins of the Temple at Jerusalem, when they were murdered by Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah (Jer. xli. 5). There can be but little doubt that any Jew reading the words in the interval between the time when they were uttered and the close of the Old Testament canon, would have associated them, more or less closely, with the place so named.

By many interpreters of our own time,* accord-

* Eichhorn, Hitzig, Ewald, and others.

ingly, the passage has been rendered thus :—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until he comes to Shiloh." Grammatically this construction is as tenable as the other. So taken, the words find, it is said, an explanation in the fact that during the period of the journey through the wilderness and the conquest of Canaan Judah was foremost, leading the van on march, occupying the post of honour in the camp (Num. ii. 3 ; x. 14) ; while afterwards, for a long period, Ephraim, from the very fact that it had the tabernacle at Shiloh within its boundaries, rose to something like pre-eminence, if not to sovereignty, over the other tribes. Most of the critics who so interpret them are disposed to look on the blessings assigned in this chapter as of later date, inserted by the compiler of the Pentateuch, and see in it accordingly a prophecy after the event. Others, who receive it as of the remote antiquity to which it professes to belong, still hold that the patriarch speaks of the place, not of a person. There is in itself nothing improbable in such a supposition. He who had dwelt so long at Shechem, who had journeyed through the length and breadth of Canaan, might well know the name of a locality like Shiloh. He might mention it as he mentions Zidon (Gen. xlix. 13).

But the question still has to be answered, What did the name mean as applied to the place ? Why was the place chosen, out of all the conquered territory, rather than Mamre, or Bethel, or Shechem, or Gilgal, or Gerizim, as the centre of the religious life of the nation, consecrated by the presence of the Sacred Tent ? And the answer to the first question is not far to seek. In the judgment of nearly all



Hebrew scholars the word Shiloh, though in that form used only as a proper name, is connected with the idea of rest, peace, tranquillity. What Jacob says accordingly, assuming the blessings to be what they purport to be, is that the tribe of Judah shall be fierce, warlike, dominant, till it gains its Shiloh, its "home of peace," that then it shall be more conspicuously than ever the elect ruler of the other tribes, "to him," to the tribe in some living personal representative, "shall the gathering of the people be." It does not connect that "coming to Shiloh" with shame and loss, but with the blessings of a time of peace. The imagery with which the prophetic benediction ends is not, like that with which it opens, one of war and terror, the lion leaping on its prey, but of peace and plenty, the "ass tied to the vine," the "teeth white with milk."

If such words as these had been actually spoken, and lingered in the memories of men, they explain why the Israelites, as soon as they had done their work of conquest, chose Shiloh for the resting-place of the tabernacle. They found a place that bore that name, that probably had borne it in the days of Jacob, and they accepted the omen. They had found their "home of peace." There they would worship the God of their fathers. And when Judah had thus come to Shiloh, that which the blessing of Jacob had proclaimed came to pass. The time of pre-eminence in war was to be followed by a like pre-eminence in peace. Great as was to be the glory of the tribe of Ephraim, and the prophecy of Jacob recognises it with abundant fulness (vv. 22—26), yet the supremacy was to rest with Judah. The words do not necessarily imply that the sceptre and

the lawgiver should depart when Judah had come to Shiloh, or even (if we take the current explanation) when Shiloh had come to him, but make that the starting-point of a career of yet greater glory.

And we may see, if I mistake not, in the acts of David, as the king in whom the words received their first great fulfilment, a yearning after one still greater. His whole soul is filled, in the midst of all the wars in which he passed his life, with the thought of peace and rest. He gives to his first-born son the name of Absalom, or "*the Father of Peace*." The son who is to succeed him on the throne is to be a "man of rest," in whose days there is to be "peace and quietness," and therefore he is called Solomon, or the "*peaceful*" one. The very city which is to be what Shiloh had been, the dwelling-place of the ark, the centre of the national religious life, bears the name of Jerusalem, or "*the inheritance of peace*." So understood, the words of the patriarch, though they do not speak of a personal king known for some reason or other by the name of Shiloh, may yet be looked on as predictive of the future glory of the tribe of Judah, the forerunner of the long line of prophecies which, after the house of David had taken its place as representing the might and majesty of the tribe, spoke of its kingdom as peaceful and blessed, divine and everlasting. And so, though in another way than it had been commonly understood, it took its place among Messianic predictions, and prepared the way for one, who should be, in a higher, ideal, spiritual sense, what Judah was here described as being, historically, he "whom his brethren should praise;" to whom should be "the gathering of the people."

It was not strange that when Shiloh had been utterly laid waste, and was associated only or chiefly with the memory of disgrace, that the whole passage should appear perplexing. And traces of that perplexity we find in the uncertainty which obviously rested on its meaning, and the attempts consequently made by translators to evade the difficulty. The Jews of Palestine, brooding over Messianic expectations, found the thought of the Anointed King there, as they found it even in the blessing which declared of another tribe that "Dan shall judge his people," and without an attempt at explanation, gave in the Targums, or paraphrastic versions of the Pentateuch, which were in common use, the rendering "until the Messiah come." Some of them, applying a system of cypher writing to the word, found that "Shiloh" corresponded to "Messiah." Those of Alexandria, in their Greek version, were less bold, and following a different reading or a conjectural etymology, gave "*until the things reserved for him shall come*, and he is the expectation of the nations." The Latin version, made by Jerome under the guidance of the Palestine Jews of the fourth century, gave an entirely different derivation to the word, and there we read "till he shall come who shall be sent." Later Jews have rendered it as "his son." Luther, who probably followed the interpretation current among the German Jews of his time, translated it by "the hero."

We are led, I believe, by a fair examination of the evidence to abandon what has been for a long period the received interpretation of this prophetic utterance. But it takes its place still, as I have said, in the succession of Messianic prophecies. It

connects with the name of Judah the future greatness of the sons of Jacob. It points to it as being, if not the greatest and strongest (that seems reserved for Ephraim), yet the representative tribe of all the families of Israel. Till it should come to Shiloh, the city of the nation's "rest," it should be first in authority and pre-eminence. And that, as has been said, was not to be necessarily the close of its greatness. It was to be, in some way which the patriarch knew not, still the object of the praises of its brethren.

And it is at least historically interesting to note how the very word thus connected with the greatness of Judah reappears in the psalms of the wilderness and the monarchy. The word "lawgiver" is one but seldom used in the Old Testament, and in three out of the six other passages in which we meet with it, it is associated more or less closely with the tribe of Judah. (1) In that fragment of a warrior's song which meets us in Num. xxi. 17, 18, we read that when the people found water, apparently after some united labour in digging through sand or rocks, they welcomed its appearance with a hymn of praise.

"Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it:
The princes digged the well;
The nobles of the people digged it,
By the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves."

We are so accustomed to speak of Moses as the "lawgiver" of Israel, that we at once apply the word to him, and think of him as giving the command which the princes and the nobles carried into execution. But if we remember that neither the English nor the Hebrew word is ever applied to

Moses in the Old Testament, and that it *was* thus associated with Judah, and that Judah was then recognised precisely in this character of *hegemony* over the other tribes, it will, I think, seem natural to refer the word to that tribe as setting the example of free, spontaneous toil. Even the "law-giver" tribe (in Jud. v. 14 the word is rendered "governor") had not disdained to take its share in the common labours. Others, however, render the clause, "with their sceptre and their staves." The reference to a personal authority is, I think, preferable, and, though we cannot insist on the sense of "lawgiver," yet the word was, at any rate, an unusual one, and in some way or other specially appropriated to the tribe of Judah. (2, 3.) In Ps. lx. 9, cviii. 9, its position is yet more remarkable. Both psalms are ascribed to David, but both include the same fragment of apparently some older hymn, and the form in which it appears implies that it had been received as an oracle marking out, after the fashions of the blessings of Jacob and of Moses, the characteristic features of the tribes of Israel. And the words are as an echo of Gen. xlix. The greatness of the tribes descended from Joseph is acknowledged.

"Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim also is the strength of mine head."

But there remained for the tribe to which the king himself belonged its old supremacy.

"Judah is my *lawgiver*."

Other prophecies more specifically pointing to the house of David might follow in rich succession, but this remained as the subsoil out of which they grew.

It could scarcely have been absent from the mind of Isaiah when in one of the most glorious of his predictions of the future glory of his people, he uttered words which were to receive a higher fulfilment than had come within the horizon of patriarch or prophet.

"The Lord is our Judge,
The Lord is our *lawgiver*."—Isaiah xxxiii. 22.

(4) The only remaining passage in which the word occurs is more difficult. In the blessings of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 21) our version gives, "And he" (the tribe of Gad) "provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the *lawgiver*, was he seated"—i.e., as the passage is commonly explained, he received an inheritance which Moses had assigned him. But neither the Greek nor the Latin version supports this translation; and a more probable rendering is, "He saw that the chief place was his, for there a lawgiver's or ruler's portion was assigned him"—i.e., he was to have the *hegemony* on the east side of the Jordan as Judah had on the west.

II. IMMANUEL. This word, too, has a history of its own, and, both as it meets us at the time when it was first uttered (Isa. vii. 14), and as interpreted by St. Matthew (i. 23), has a special prominence. The worst and weakest of the kings of the house of David was sitting upon the throne of Judah. Israel and Syria were joined in alliance against him, and aimed at deposing him, and appointing some "son of Tabeal,"* otherwise unknown to us, as a tributary

* Who the soldier of fortune was that thus aimed at taking possession of the throne of Judah we can only conjecture. M. Botta's translation of one of the inscriptions of Sennacherib's monuments may, perhaps, throw light on this obscure passage of Jewish his-

king. The king, and his nobles, and the people are panic-stricken. Their hearts are moved "as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind." And then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, and bade him go with his son Shear-Jashub to meet the king, as he stood (probably superintending the preparations for defence) "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool." The name which Isaiah had given to that son ("The remnant shall return") embodied at once the threatening and the hope which had been revealed to him, when, as in the narrative of chap. vi., he was called to bear the burden of a prophet's work. He goes to the king, whose cowardice takes the form of a sullen despair, murmuring at the doom which he looks on as inevitable, and bids him "fear not, neither be fainthearted." The confederacy which seemed so threatening should come to nothing. There was another power mightier and more terrible in the background, destined to be as a scourge for the sins of Judah itself; but sure, before it did that work, to sweep away the monarchies of Syria and Israel altogether. The king listens in sullen silence: and then, as if meeting the doubt and unbelief which that silence showed, the prophet bids him ask "a sign of the Lord thy God." The king may choose the region of the sign. He may "ask it either in the depths, or in the height above." Ahaz, still with a moody impatience, which is almost a sneer, and yet hypocritically hides itself under a show of

tory. Speaking of his victory over the Zidonians, the Assyrian king appears as saying, "I placed *Tubaa* on the throne, and laid a tribute upon him." We are led to think of some Phœnician noble, aiming at making his son a subject-king, and foiled at first, succeeding afterwards in getting a throne for himself. Comp. Le Normand Hist. de l'Orient, i. p. 465.

reverence, refuses, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." He will bear his doom as he may. He will not bring himself under the censure of devout men by asking for any proof that the message which speaks of deliverance is true. And then the suppressed indignation of the prophet burst forth, as kindled into a white heat.

"Hear ye now, O house of David : Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also ? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign ; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL."

The words have been, as was natural, very variously interpreted. One school confines the whole scope of the passage within the horizon of the prophet's own period. He points to some maiden not yet a mother, some one, it might be, of those who were among the king's handmaids, and predicts that a child shall be born of her, whose name, like those which the prophet gave his own children, should be the witness of a divine truth, proclaiming to a cowardly king and a despairing people, "God is WITH US." So that child should be to Ahaz and his house what Isaiah's sons were, "a sign and a wonder," and as he grew to manhood, eating of "butter and honey," the common food of infancy, learning to "refuse the evil and to choose the good," the events that would come to pass should show that the name was no idle boast. Before he grew to man's estate, the land which Ahaz had good reason to abhor should be "forsaken of both her kings." Some who hold this view of the primary meaning of the prediction accept it as having had a fulfilment beyond that which came within the prophet's range

of vision, even as Keble says of other unconscious prophecies :—

“As little children dream and lisp of Heaven,

So thoughts beyond their thoughts to those high bards were given.”

Others, more thorough in their unbelief, look on the Gospel narrative itself as the after-growth of a mistaken interpretation of what had originally only this limited significance.

The general current of Christian interpretation has, I need not say, set in the opposite direction. It has seen, in Isaiah's words, the utterance of one to whom was given, for the moment, a distinct foresight, both of the Incarnation itself and of the miraculous birth through which it was to be accomplished. He saw, as it were in vision, the Virgin-mother and the Divine Child. The very proclamation of such a wonder was itself a sign. The reference to contemporary history is, on this explanation, equivalent to saying, “Within such time as that wondrous child would grow to maturity, this and that event, almost as startling as that birth itself, will happen, and will become in its turn a pledge for the greater marvel which yet remains to be accomplished.”

It would be at variance with the whole spirit in which Scripture should be studied to pass a sentence of condemnation upon the many devout Christian thinkers who have adopted the first of these three methods of interpretation. For many years I was disposed to rest in it as affording an example of what pervades the whole series of Messianic predictions, the transfer to a higher region of words that had a primary historical fulfilment—of the law that whatever was spoken of king, or priest, or prophet, was

true, with a perfected truth, of the Christ who had united all three offices in Himself. But the last and, if one may so speak, more supernatural rendering of the passage has much, I believe, in its favour. On the very ground occupied by those who reject the Gospel history of the birth of Christ as mythical, they, though they may look on the words of Isaiah as telling of a baseless dream, cannot consistently contend that the meaning which Christendom has attached to them was necessarily foreign to the circle of his thoughts. They argue that men in the first century of the Christian era were so possessed with the thought that the Messiah must be virgin-born, and that thus only could He escape the hereditary taint of human sin, that they read into the words of Isaiah a meaning which was not there, and half-framed, half-accepted, consciously or unconsciously, a history that corresponded to their imaginations. In no other way could they conceive of a true Incarnation of the Divine Word. But if so, it may be replied, if their sense of human guilt led them to that thought, might not the same sense have weighed on the mind of Isaiah? Had not the words of the Psalmist, telling men that they were shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (Ps. li. 5), sunk deep into men's hearts? Did not the prophet himself feel that he was "unclean, and dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa. vi. 5)—"a people laden with iniquity," "whose righteousnesses were as filthy rags," from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, filled with "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores" (i. 4—6)? And with that terrible sense of a clinging, ineradicable evil, how was he, who was looking for a king to reign in

righteousness, on whom "the Spirit of the Lord was to rest" (xi. 2), whose name was to be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (ix. 6), to think of Him as born after the laws of the common birth of all men, and so inheriting their corruption?

But assuming that this was so, that the words, as he spoke them, had the meaning which is commonly assigned to them, it does not follow that he saw it clearly. To the prophets of the Old Testament, as to those of the New, it was not given to "know the times and the seasons which the Father had set in his own power" (Acts i. 7). They "inquired and searched diligently what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify" (1 Pet. i. 11). Each in his turn, Samuel when he witnessed the rise of David, David when he watched with hope the growth of Solomon, believed that they saw already the dawning of the coming day. To Isaiah it might well seem, as to other "men of desires," that the time was at hand. When Hezekiah was born, though there was no marvel in the manner of his birth, he would seem to have looked on him as fulfilling, or at least foreshadowing the fulfilment of, his Messianic hopes. Is it too bold a conjecture that one who, being the child of so base a father, grew up in such unstained righteousness, must have had a mother who might well seem almost to retain her maiden purity in her married state? And so he bore, in a true though a lower sense, the name Immanuel, not as being commonly called by it, but as Solomon bore the name Jedidiah (2 Sam. xii. 25), as a mystic, inaugural title, the *nomen et omen* of his reign. So, thinking of one who is to be

on the throne of Judah when the Assyrian invader is to sweep over the country like a flood, Isaiah describes his progress: "He shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O IMMANUEL" (viii. 8). And then passing to the name whose very syllables were as an oracle of hope, he utters his defiance to conspirators and invaders alike.

"Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought;
Speak the word, and it shall not stand:
For *God is with us.*"

"IMMANUEL" is still our watchword, the strong tower of our confidence and hope.

So the life of this king for whom Isaiah hoped, came before him as the witness of God's presence with his people. So Hezekiah was, in his day and generation, as David had been in his, a partial answer to men's hopes and cravings. So, with that failure of perspective which was almost the inevitable consequence of a clear intuition of future glories, with no prevision of times and seasons, the highest thoughts of redemption, the fullest Gospel promises were associated with the places, persons, events, that were most conspicuous in the prophet's own time. As the Apostles, before they had been taught by the experience of frustrated hopes, believed that the second coming of their Lord and the end of the world were indeed nigh at hand, to be looked for before the generation in which they lived had passed away, so was it with the great prophet. When the true IMMANUEL came, when the Virgin Mother had brought forth her first-born child in Bethlehem,

then those who wrote the record of the birth saw how the old words had been fulfilled, and gave God thanks, and confessed that "God" was "with" them of a truth. The IMMANUEL had at last come.

III. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. We are carried by this name to a later prophet, and to darker and more troublous times. Jehoiakim sat on the throne of his father Josiah, but was in all things utterly unlike him, "building his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong," with "eyes and heart" set upon his covetousness, to "shed innocent blood, and for oppression and for violence to do it" (Jer. xxii. 13—17). And priests and princes were, after the pattern of their king, destroying and scattering the sheep of the Lord's pasture (Jer. xxiii. 1). At such a time, the heart of the prophet of Anathoth might well have sunk within him in despair. And therefore the "word of the Lord" comes to him with a message which bids him hope. Degradation, misery, exile, lie before his people. But in the end there shall be a better time. Taking up almost the very words of Isaiah, speaking of the expected deliverer by the self-same title, he declares: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (*Jehovah Tsidkenu*). Here, as in the case of Immanuel, it was not meant that any king should ever bear that name, or that even the anointed heir of the house of David, the righteous Branch, should be so known in the common speech.

of men, but that this was what he should *be*. The name should be the exponent of the nature. What the prophet thought of, then, was a king who should both be righteous and just himself, and the cause of righteousness in others, one to whom a people laden with iniquities might turn for deliverance, who would satisfy the strong desire of all who hungered and thirsted after a righteousness for which they had hitherto sought in vain. This, too, as with Isaiah's prophecies, was connected with what I have called a *failure of perspective*, associated with the return of Israel from the north country, just as the promise of the "new covenant," the "new testament," which received its fulfilment on the night of the Last Supper, and has been identified by Christendom with the sum and substance of Christianity (Jer. xxxi. 31), was connected in his thoughts with the return of Ephraim, the populousness of the desolated cities of Judah, the rebuilding of Jerusalem "from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner" (Jer. xxxi. 18, 27, 38).

The words thus spoken seem to have made an impression both on the prophet's own mind and on those who heard them. He returns to them again (xxxiii. 16), but they then appear as giving the name, not of the king, but of the city over which he rules.

"In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely, and this is the name wherewith *she* shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

That name was to float over the walls of the New Jerusalem as the watchword on its banner. The holy city, that had become unholy as a den of

robbers, was to find her righteousness in accepting the sovereignty of the righteous King. And the prophetic oracle thus given, explains, if I mistake not, what otherwise seems arbitrary and capricious. When the last king of the house of David was placed upon the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, he changed his name, we are told, from Mattaniah to Zedekiah (2 Kings xxiv. 17). The mere fact of a change of name of some kind was, of course, as in the case of that of Eliakim, altered by Pharaoh Necho to Jehoiakim, only the symbol of the fact that he reigned by a new title, was the servant of a new master. But the choice of the new name must have been a matter of indifference to the Chaldean conqueror, and may fairly be regarded as indicating a policy or pretensions of some kind on the part of the king himself. And the striking fact which we have to note is, that the name so chosen, Zedekiah (*the righteousness of Jehovah*), is, though not in sound, yet in substance, identical with that which had become famous by Jeremiah's prophecy. It was as though he would present himself to the people as the "righteous Branch," the king who was to raise up the house of David that had fallen, and make Judah and Jerusalem to dwell safely.

Not so was the promise to be fulfilled. Those who had looked for the advent of the true king had still to ask, "Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" But though He tarried, they still waited for Him, and at last, in the "fulness of time," He came, and then they found that *what* they had been looking for had been given to them, though not *as* they looked for it. There was One who left on men's minds the impressions of a faultless righteousness, whom his

disciples learnt to speak of as being pre-eminently the "Just," the "Righteous" One (Acts iii. 15; vii. 52; xxii. 14). They were led to see in Him, though He had died a malefactor's death instead of sitting on the throne of Judah, the true "Branch" of the house of David, the "Rod out of the stem of Jesse." Those who believed in Him, and loved Him, were taught by a living personal experience, that their inmost, highest life, was transmuted and transfigured into the likeness of His life. Christ Jesus was "made unto them wisdom, and *righteousness*, and salvation" (1 Cor. i. 30). They were taught how they might become "the *righteousness* of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). The words of the seer of Anathoth, like those of Jacob and of Isaiah, were raised as to a higher region, and shone as with a new brightness. It was true at once of the Divine King and of the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, that the one should be called by the Name of the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and the other accept it as the law of its existence.

THE TREE OF LIFE.



IF the many symbols of truth, joy, holiness, which meet us in the great treasure-house of truth itself, and therefore also of all that foreshadows and represents it, there is one which stands conspicuous above all others. By what must have been, as far as man's agency was concerned, an unforeseen result of the order in which the books of the Bible have been arranged, it meets us at the beginning of the sacred Volume, and comes into fresh prominence at its close. In the glimpse which is given us into the mysteries of that perfection from which the human race has fallen, and to the restoration of which, in those who are willing to be restored, the whole plan and purpose of God's revelation of his will is made subservient, we find in the garden of Eden, the "paradise* of joy," in which man was set to dress it and to keep it, the *Tree of Life* growing side by side with the *Tree of Knowledge*, the knowledge of good and evil. The latter, representing, as it does, the expansion of human thoughts and powers by the assertion of its

* The special meaning which we attach to the word *Paradise* (originally Persian for a park or garden) comes from its use in the Greek version of Gen. ii. and iii. "Eden," too, is treated by them as a descriptive, not as a proper, noun, and the two words, by which they render "the Garden of Eden," mean "the garden of luxurious joy."

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and majesty and terror, was placed at the entrance of the garden to "keep the way of the tree of life." Nature and man's work in nature were interposed, as it were, between the soul and its Creator, and the slow work of a painful discipline began.

In the closing vision of the Apocalypse, which with a profound significance blends together in its gorgeous symbolism the two thoughts of the Paradise of God and the heavenly Jerusalem, the same imagery reappears. "Out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" there flowed a "pure river of water of life clear as crystal," and "in the midst of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, was there *the tree of life*, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month."* No longer is it guarded in that vision by the cherub's fiery sword, for then there shall be no more curse, and He who saith, "Behold, I come quickly," who is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," even He saith, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to *the tree of life*, and may enter in through the gates into the city,"† For those who are admitted to that heavenly city, whose faith is perfected by love, there is no longer the necessity for the discipline of suffering. God's education of their spirits has reached its completion. Instead of the words which implied

they shadow forth the thought that beneath all the marvel and mystery of nature there lies the yet greater mystery of God's personal relationship to man. In Ezekiel's vision (ch. i.) they are blended with the wheels which represent the ever-varying and unresting activity of the forces which underlie the phenomena of the universe. In the Apocalypse, "the living creatures full of eyes within and without" give a variation of the same type, with the additional thought that the powers of nature work out the will of an all-pervading Providence.

* Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

† Rev. xxii. 13, 14.

that there was a peril in the immortality for which man was not prepared,—“lest he put forth his hands, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever,”—there is now free access, and full fruition. The redeemed who walk in the heavenly city eat of its fruits, but its blessings are spread far and wide beyond the innermost circle of those who share the fulness of that heavenly joy—for “the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”*

We find, then, this profoundly suggestive symbol at the beginning and the end of what is now for us *the Book*. But, as might be expected, it is found elsewhere also. Understood with greater or less clearness, suggesting often to men’s minds more than they could explain to others or understand themselves, it entered into their loftiest hopes and inspired them with noble thoughts. Look, for example, at the vision of Ezekiel, in this as in so many other things the prototype of the seer of Patmos. He, too, sees a mystic stream as of the water of life, deepening more and more, from the ankles to the loins, and then “as waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over,” and “by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that,” just as in the Apocalypse, “shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months . . . and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”† As was natural in the language of those who saw visions and dreamt dreams, who were caught up as into “the third heaven and the paradise of God,” and saw “unspeakable things which it was not lawful

* Rev. xxii. 2.


† Ezek. xlvii. 2—12.

for a man to utter," the two prophets of the Old and the New Testament give, as it were, the vision without the interpretation, and leave the symbol to do its work of quickening man's spiritual life, and suggesting profoundest truths, without a formal explanation. It was left for another writer, taught by the self-same Spirit, but endowed with different gifts, to complete its teaching, and to unfold the meaning of that which lay beneath the outward sign. He to whom God gave wide thoughts and abounding knowledge, and largeness of heart, as the sand upon the sea-shore, showed that he had learnt the lesson, and was able to lead others. He proclaims of wisdom, the true wisdom, which has its beginning in the fear of the Lord, among many other glorious words, "that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," that "she is a *tree of life* to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her."* Here, then, we get the key to the parables and dark sayings which have occupied our thoughts hitherto. The Tree of Life is *wisdom*, bringing with it immortality, making that immortality a blessing to those who seek it rightly, as contrasted with the tree of *knowledge*. On the one side, the restless, subtle, serpent-like activity of the intellect, the feverish craving for excitement, the passionate love of merely outward beauty, all tending downwards, stimulating sense, and ending in a boundless sensuality, working man's fall at first, and evermore repeating its fatal work as with power accumulated in its transmission; and on the other side, the wisdom, which is also life, which begins with awe, reverence, obedience, which leads to

* Prov. iii. 18.

purity and holiness, to self-knowledge and self-discipline, which ripens into love, and is one with the eternal charity—this is the choice which was offered to the first-created man, and which is offered now to us. During the long centuries in which men were led step by step, slowly, and in the darkness, as on “the world’s great altar-stairs,” to the knowledge of God, the thought of the blessedness which they had forfeited, but which was not lost to them for ever, was kept up in many divine forms. They were led to think of the tree of life as still reserved in the Paradise of God, though as yet they were shut out from it, because they had made themselves unfit. When the narrative which told them of it was brought before them, as we find it in the book of Genesis, they must have ceased almost, if not altogether, to think of it as still to be found in any earthly region. We read of no pilgrims going forth to seek it near the source of Hiddekel or Euphrates. Whatever dreams may have haunted the hot fancies of a later age, Hyperborean happiness in the far North beyond the frozen snows, Islands of the Blessed in the Western Ocean, those who “look for another country, that is, a heavenly,” for “a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” must have looked there also, and nowhere else, for the Water and the Tree of Life.

So far the symbol and the truth which underlay it have met us in the spoken or written Word. If I mistake not, it entered also into those patterns of heavenly things which were kept before men’s minds in the outward visible imagery of the tabernacle. All interpreters agree that the golden lamp which stood by the table of shewbread bore witness of the



divine, eternal, uncreated light, of that wisdom which is "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path," the flame being the outward manifestation of wisdom in the life, the oil answering to the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, without which the light fails, and the lamp goes out. But those who read the elaborate directions in Exod. xxv. for the construction of that lamp, must be struck with the stress laid on details and on words, all of which tend to bring out its resemblance, in greater or less measure, to a tree.* As with nearly all religious symbols, we have not an imitative naturalism, but a conventional type; but the meaning of that typical form is unmistakable. There is the central shaft growing like a tall palm-tree, and on either side the three branches that spring out,† subdividing (as many think) into smaller branches, or pendent ornaments, and on each branch there are buds and flowers, and almond-like fruits,‡ and into this fruit-like bowl the oil flowed, and there the flame was kindled. To those who, like the writer of the Book of Proverbs, had learnt the true meaning of the Tree of Life, this twofold symbolism must have been pregnant with profoundest meanings. It taught them that the light was also the life of men. It was a perpetual witness that as God was Light, and in Him was no darkness at all, so in Him, and in Him only, was the eternal Life.

Nor is it without interest to note how, even in the

* The resemblance is worked out with great fulness in Bähr's *Treatise on the Symbolism of the Tabernacle*, "Symbolik," i. p. 446.

† The seven main branches thus formed, like the seven lamps before the throne in Rev. v. and vi., and the seven golden candlesticks in Rev. i., represent the gifts of the Spirit in their manifold variety and Divine perfection. See Bähr's "Symbolik," i. 443.

‡ The number of these has been calculated at from sixty-six to seventy.

earlier stages of the world's history, the Apocalyptic words have been found true, and the leaves of that tree have been for the healing of the nations. Echoes of that primeval truth meet us in the religious traditions of many ancient races, and we may well hope that in the midst of the gradually thickening darkness it served to keep alive some reminiscences, and to waken some thoughts which could not have been wholly fruitless. Again and again in the monuments of Egypt do we find this Tree of Life with many branches and many fruits. Often from the midst of its leaves and boughs a female arm is stretched (the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs?), pouring from a golden urn streams of living water into the thirsty lips of men and women and children.* Sometimes, as if recognising a wider and more universal blessedness, even the stranger and the slave are seen catching up some of the drops that trickle down as from the overflowing stream which is bestowed upon the wise and good. And it is the same more or less with the hieroglyphs of other nations. On the ruins of the great Assyrian cities which have been recently laid open and brought among us, we find everywhere the sacred tree, obviously the most holy of all symbols, beneath which kings and priests stand in veneration.† The religion of the Zend-Avesta looks also to a mysterious tree as connected with all the life, and joy, and blessedness which belonged to the

* Compare M. de Bunsen's "Keys of St. Peter," p. 418. Whatever judgment we may form of the inference drawn from it, the fact that this representation is found, as I have described, remains unaffected, and is unquestionably at once interesting and suggestive.

† This has been made familiar to English readers partly by Mr. Layard's book on Nineveh, yet more so by its being the device chosen for the back of Dr. Smith's well-known "Dictionary of the Bible."

kingdom of Ormuzd.* Even in the tree-worship of Buddhism, in the legend which connects the sacred fig-tree with its founder's attainment of that supreme wisdom by which he became One with the impersonal Intelligence of the universe, which he strangely identified with the highest blessedness attainable by man, we may possibly trace a dim, distorted refraction of the beauty of the original symbol.†

Christian art and poetry have, as might be expected, taken up the symbol, and developed it into new and profounder meanings. The accursed tree—the tree of shame and contumely and condemnation, of agony and death—this has been seen to be, in the mystical imagery of the Apocalypse, as the tree of life. Of the cross of Christ it is true that a man may put forth his hand and eat of the fruit thereof, and live for ever. The leaves of that tree, the indirect influences, the remoter workings of the truth which it shadows forth, “are for the healing of the nations.”‡

We may not rest, however, in a merely historical survey of the aspects which this symbolism presents

* “God,” it was said, “had enclosed the spirit of the prophets, through which the word and the law were given, in a tree. I quote, at second hand, from Kleuker’s “Zendavesta,” through Bähr, i. p. 448. In the later Persian legends of Firdousi, Zoroaster was said to have brought a cypress tree from Paradise and planted it before the door of a sanctuary in Kashmir. (Spiegel’s “Zendavesta,” ii. p. 13). So, too, the tree known as the mystic *hom*, is called the “destroyer of death,” and grows “by the fountain of the water of life.”

† In the Buddhist legend the tree was the *Ficus religiosa*. It was revered for centuries subsequent to the time of Sakya Mouni, the prophet of Buddhism, as the “tree of understanding.” St. Hilaire’s “Bouddha et sa Religion,” p. 30.

‡ A whole page might be filled with references in illustration. It will be enough here to mention Bishop Wordsworth’s note on Rev. xxii. 2, in his Greek Testament, and Mr. Neale’s *Medieval Hymns*, “Laudes crucis attollamus,” p. 140.

to us. It has a permanent, a practical significance. To every one of us there is the same choice offered as of old. The Tempter comes to many among us with the same subtlety. If there be a wisdom of the serpent, cautious, reticent, judging rightly of the proportion between means and ends, not incompatible with the harmlessness of the dove which the disciples of Christ are taught to strive after, there is also that which cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. We still have to choose, all of us, between the tree of knowledge and the tree of wisdom, which is also the Tree of Life. At every step, from earliest boyhood to maturity, in the stir and activity of man's working life, yes, even in the weariness or the tranquillity of age, it is a question of infinite importance for every one of us, which we are seeking after, whether we eat of the fruit that "brought death into the world, and all our woe," or of that which giveth life and immortality.


The distinction, I need hardly say, does not lie wholly or chiefly in the subject-matter of what we know. There are, indeed, regions of knowledge upon which it is perilous to enter, and which yet fascinate men's minds with the excitement of a new sensation and an enlarged experience. Men's eyes may be opened to look into the mysteries of evil, the very depths of Satan, to plunge into the foulness of the foul, or the scorn of the scorner, till the mind is vexed and haunted as by spectres which it cannot banish. Of many forms of art and literature it is true that it were better never to have known them, or having known, were it possible, to blot them altogether from the tablets of our memory. The trail of the serpent is upon them. Men are tempted.

as by one who is more subtle than any beast of the field—are led to doubt the eternal law of retribution, that “whoso eats of that tree shall surely die,” and so they are left to the shame and confusion which belong to a lost inheritance and a forfeited purity. Their eyes are opened, but it is to see that they are naked, and they hide themselves among the trees of the garden, shrinking from that vision of the Holy and Eternal Presence which beatifies the pure in heart.

But apart from those darker forms of a knowledge in itself evil, and only obtainable by some forfeiture in body, soul, or spirit, of our true blessedness, there are in this world of ours many things which it is good and right to know, which our intellect seeks with a natural, blameless craving to comprehend, which are compatible with a true and holy life, while yet the knowledge, when gained, falls far short of the wisdom which is also life. The marvels and mysteries of the universe—the order of the stars in their courses—the laws of the mighty forces which surround us, extending through all space, and having with each other strange affinities and capacities for interchange of form, the countless types of matter, organized and unorganized, of natures animate and inanimate, that we see on every side—the laws and limits of human reason, and the processes by which we pass from the rude sensations of the savage to the full-orbed vision of the masters of those who know—the history in the remote past of the earth in which we live, of the race to which we belong—the many languages of the past and of the present in their laws, their origin, and their affinities—the great master-pieces of art and genius which the world will not willingly let die—the story of

wars and dynasties, and laws and constitutions—all these things it is good, according to our power, to study and to know. It were ill done to banish any one of them from the range of Christian study; though of many, perhaps of most of them, we must be content, for the most part, to know but little. And yet, if the knowledge end here, it does not sustain, it does not comfort, it does not purify. The lives of men of letters and men of science show that it hardly seems to raise them above the low ambitions and the petty jealousies of life. The wider vision which it gives, or promises to give, is often found united with the narrow aims and contracted sympathies of a miserable selfishness. If it mounts as to the Alpine heights from which men look out upon fair valleys and fertile plains and great cities, and stand at the fountain-head of mighty rivers, and trace them in their winding course, it brings with it too often the chill wind that benumbs and narcotises; and the light which is without love is like the glare from the wild fields of snow that first bewilders and then blinds utterly.

No! there must be more than this. With knowledge there must be also wisdom—the temper of reverence, tranquillity, content, which sees things as they are in their relation to the eternal life, which, if it hate ignorance much, hates sin yet more; which, if it value largeness of heart as it should be valued, gives a yet higher place to its purity. Knowledge puffeth up; but charity—love, the love which is part of wisdom—buildeth up. Whatever may be the worth of a man's work as a labourer in the great mines of knowledge, even though he contribute new discoveries in nature, or solve some of the dark



problems of human history, though the result of his long years of labour be to add something to the inheritance which his generation transmits to its successors, yet, as regards himself, if he has done nothing more, the work is hollow and unsubstantial. There is the semblance, but not the reality of growth. The touch of pain, adversity, disappointment—the remorse that follows on the sense of a misused life—the shame and confusion of the thoughts that accuse each other—these will make short work with its pretensions, and it will collapse utterly. But to go on day by day, walking in the light while we have the light, using the knowledge which God has given us to his glory, doing his work, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, to persevere steadily with all patient continuance in well-doing—this it is to build surely and safely. Every day we add stone by stone to that edifice of our lives; and if it is founded upon the eternal rock, then, though the rains fall, and the winds blow, and the floods beat upon it, yet it will not fall.

*** It seems worth while to add to what has been already said a short account of the form which the identification of the Cross of Christ with the Tree of Life assumed in the legends of Mediæval Christendom. When Adam was at the point of death, so the story ran, he sent Seth to the gates of Paradise that he might gain access to the Tree of Life and bring of the Oil of Mercy which flowed from its branches to anoint his body for the burial. That oil he was not allowed to have; it might not be used for man till the Redemption was accomplished; but the cherub that guarded the gates of Paradise gave him a slip from the sacred Tree, and with this he returned, and planted it on his father's grave in Golgotha, the centre of the earth, the "place of the skull." There it took root and grew and became a tree. From it came the wood of the rod with which Moses wrought signs and wonders in Egypt, of that which budded in token of the Divine sanction given to the priesthood of Aaron, of the pole on which the brazen serpent was lifted up, and finally, that of the Cross itself. See Archbishop Trench's *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 181, and a poem by Rückert, "The Tree of Life."

CALEB, THE SON OF JEPHUNNEH.

WE are all familiar with the history of the faithful hero of the tribe of Judah who shared with Joshua the son of Nun the glory of having been brave and steadfast when the other ten who went with them to search out the land of Canaan proved cowardly and faint-hearted,—to whom, with Joshua as his one companion out of all the host that had come out of the land of Egypt, it was given to enter upon the inheritance which the rest had forfeited. So far as the ethical significance of the story is concerned, so far as we read the Bible narrative for “example of life and instruction of manners” only, we need not perhaps go further. But here also, as in so many other regions of biblical inquiry, there is a history that lies below the surface, not without its significance as bearing upon the growth and fortunes of the chosen people, fruitful also in materials for thought as we track out the succession of events in that marvellous continuity which, in sacred history as in that which we call profane, knits together events of greatest moment, and those that are, apparently at least, trivial. What I wish to dwell on in this paper is the life and character of Caleb, the son of

Jephunneh, as one of the first conspicuous proselytes to the faith of Israel.

That he was a proselyte,* and not of the seed of Jacob, perhaps not even of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt. In Num. xiii. 6, he appears, it is true, as one of the chief warriors of the tribe of Judah, and is chosen to represent that tribe, as Joshua represents Ephraim, in the expedition into Canaan. But in Num. xxxii. 12, Josh. xiv. 6, 14, he is described by another epithet as the "Kenezite;" and this at once throws a new light on his position. If we accept the list of nations given in Gen. xv. 19—21, as belonging to the time to which it purports to belong, the Kenizzites take their place among the earliest inhabitants of Palestine, along with the Kenites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, the Jebusites. It is remarkable that we have no trace of their existence as a people at the time of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites. They would appear, *i.e.*, to have been, in the meantime, either exterminated or absorbed by some other race. The list of the so-called "dukes" of Edom in Gen. xxxvi. shows, in ver 42, the name of Kenaz as one of them; and hence it has been inferred that the Kenezites as a tribe were descended from him and took his name. This, however, assumes the later date of the apparently earlier chronicle of Gen. xv., and, so far as one may venture to conjecture in the midst of so much that is uncertain, it is, I think, more likely that the name

* It is due to Lord Arthur Hervey to name him as having been the first, if not to notice the fact, yet to bring it into the prominence it deserves. Comp. his article, "Caleb," in the "Dictionary of the Bible."

of the Edomite prince (connected as those princes were with the wilder tribes of the wilderness) indicates some union, or alliance ending in incorporation, with part of the older tribe, while the other was drawn towards the descendants of Jacob. It will be seen afterwards that the close juxtaposition in which they stand to the Kenites is every way important, and connects itself with what we shall be able to trace in the history of Caleb and his descendants.

It is noticeable that the genealogies of the tribe of Judah given in 1 Chron. ii., give us the name of an earlier Caleb as belonging to that tribe. It would seem probable, accordingly, that the Kenezite convert, on his adoption of the faith and reception of the covenant of Israel, was incorporated with one of its chief families, and took a name that had already become conspicuous. The fact of such an accession to the numbers of the Israelites before the time of the Exodus, is, as Lord Arthur Hervey has pointed out, every way significant. It does not stand alone. Among the children of Ashur the son of Hezron (of the same family, *i.e.*, as the older Caleb), we find the name of "Temani," members, *i.e.*, of the Edomite nation (1 Chron. i. 36; iv. 6). The names of the sons of Caleb, as given in 1 Chron. ii. 50 ("Shobal and the sons of Manahath"), are identical with Edomite names in the genealogy of Gen. xxxvi. 20—23.* I follow the same writer in noting two other

* I am compelled to admit, with Lord Arthur Hervey, the existence of almost inextricable confusion in the genealogical tables of the First Book of Chronicles. Names of persons and places are mixed up together, and what appears to be a pedigree represents, as far as we can judge, simply local relations. But in the midst of this confusion, all the more striking, perhaps, because of it, the connection of Caleb and his house with the Edomites, the Rechabites, and the Kenites stands out distinctly.

suggestive peculiarities of expression. (1.) When we come to the division of the land of Canaan among the Israelites in Josh. xv. 14, we read that "Unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part *among the children of Judah*;" words which would be strange and unmeaning, if he had been by lineal descent a member of that tribe, but which become natural and appropriate if we think of him as a proselyte. (2.) That when the same fact is referred to in Josh. xiv. 14, it is given in the statement that "Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh *the Kenezite*, because that he wholly followed *Jehovah, God of Israel*." The contrast between the foreign origin and the true faith is dwelt on as calling for the special pre-eminence. The admission of proselytes, as in Ps. lxxxvii., the blessing pronounced by Isaiah on "the sons of the strangers who gave themselves unto the Lord" (Isa. lvi. 3), are thus, as it were, anticipated in the earliest records of Israel. It is clear (1.) that some considerable section of the Edomite or yet older races were numbered as proselytes among the children of Israel; (2.) that the tribe of Judah was that which, as in its earlier and later history—in the intercourse of Judah and his sons with Tamar, in the marriages of Salmon with Rahab, and of Boaz with Ruth, was the most ready to open its arms to receive such converts; (3.) that this addition to the number of the Israelites, properly so called, is, at least, a partial explanation of the startling magnitude of the numbers which meet us in the census of the population taken at the time of the Exodus.

The list of coincidences, pointing to results which are at least interesting, and are, I believe, more

important in their bearing on the history of Israel than has commonly been suspected, has not yet been completed. (1.) In the genealogy of 1 Chron. ii. 19, 20, Caleb is described, not as the "son of Jephunneh," but as "the son of Hur," the grandson of the earlier Caleb. The probable explanation of the discrepancy is that on his reception into the covenant, he, like later proselytes, was adopted into a *family* as well as into a *tribe*, was registered in formal genealogies as the son of the adopting father. But, if so, then there is something specially significant in the fact that the man who thus adopts him is he who occupies a place co-ordinate with Aaron among the chieftains of Israel, standing at the right hand of Moses in the first combat with Amalek after the escape from Egypt (Exod. xvii. 10), the grandfather of the Bezaleel to whom was assigned the construction of the tabernacle. The position occupied by Caleb at once placed him, alien as he was by birth, among those who were foremost in the government of Israel. When he is chosen to be one of the twelve spies, it is as a "prince" or "chieftain." (2.) Both in 1 Chron. ii. 50—55, and in 1 Chron. iv. 11—17, there is a close connection indicated between Caleb and the Kenites, and especially with that branch of them which became conspicuous as the "house of Rechab." Confusing and perplexing as the genealogical tables are, with manifest dislocations and other errors of transcription, it is yet clear that they connect the Kenazite convert with the others whom Gen. xv. 19 shows to have been of a kindred tribe, and who first, under Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses (Num. x. 25; Jud. i. 13; iv. 11), and then under Jonadab the son of Rechab (2 Kings x. 14;

Jer. xxxv.), became so prominent in the religious history of Israel, and exercised, probably, so great an influence on its growth. If we believe the Kenites and the Kenezites to have represented, in part, the older patriarchal system, and in part the higher culture which had developed itself in Edom during the long period of the degradation of the Israelites in Egypt, it is interesting to trace their connection with persons and places that played a prominent part in the events that followed. And this is clearly the case with the posterity of Caleb. With whatever allowances for transpositions and the like, or for the identification of persons and places so common in Hebrew records of this nature, it is clear that they are connected in the genealogy referred to with the foundation of Ephrath, the city to which Samuel's father belonged before he went to reside at Ramathaim Zophim; with that of Bethlehem, the city of the family of David; with that of Kirjath-jearim, which served so long as the asylum of the ark; with "the families of the scribes," distinctly specified as of Rechabite and Kenite origin. Was there a Kenite element working in all these instances? Did they, as a recent writer has contended, represent the more ascetic, prophetic, mystic element in the religion of Israel, transmitting the thoughts which were afterwards developed in their completeness in the writing of the prophets and the melody of the Psalms?*

* Compare M. Ernest de Bunsen's "Keys of St. Peter," ch. 1. If we go beyond the range of the canonical books of the Old Testament, we get an unexpected confirmation of the conclusion aimed at in the text. The Jerusalem Targum, whenever the Kenites are named in Genesis or Numbers, uniformly designates them, not by that name, but as *Salmaites*; obviously with a reference to the statement in 1 Chron. ii. 51, which places "*Salma the father of*

The thoughts which thus gather round the name of Caleb will give a new interest, if I mistake not, to the facts of his history. He, the proselyte, before the time when his name first meets us, must have been already prominent among the chieftains of Judah. The affinity of race which connected him with Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, and the tribe of Kenites that followed him, must have given him a special influence as a link between the two nations that were thus united. The ties of adoption, which bound him to the family of Bezaleel, would tend to make him zealous in his allegiance to the *cultus* of which the Tabernacle was the centre. And so, accordingly, he is chosen as representing the tribe of Judah, as one of the twelve who are to start on a difficult and dangerous enterprise. For him it was a journey to a land which his fathers had once occupied, but from which they had apparently been dispossessed by the spread of the Amorites and the Canaanites. He was now coming to it as to a heritage which, according to his natural lineage, he had renounced, in order that he might claim it as belonging to himself and to his newly-adopted people. They journey through the length and breadth of the land, on to its northern Syrian frontier. They bring back with them the gigantic cluster of the grapes of

Bethlehem" among the sons of Caleb. This last coincidence, which M. de Bunsen does not seem to have noticed, gives some support to his hypothesis that David himself was in some way or other connected with the Kenite families of Judah. As regards his own descent, it is, I think, clear that it was, in the male line, purely Israelite; but it may be noticed that by his marriage with Abigail, the widow of Nabal, who was of "the house of Caleb" (1 Sam. xxv. 3), he became connected with the Kenezites, and that after his successful raid against the Amalekites, he sends gifts, as to the cities of Judah, Hebron included, so also to the "cities of the Kenites" (1 Sam. xxx. 29).

Eshcol,* which was to be a sample of the fruitfulness of the lands. They spend forty days in watching the character of the people and the strength of their fenced cities. Of all that they saw, Hebron was that which most impressed them with its size and strength. Inhabited by some remnant of a race yet more ancient than the Kenites and Kenezites, the Rephaim, or Giants, the tribe of the sons of Anak, already venerable for an antiquity which went beyond that of the oldest Egyptian city (Num. xiii. 22), it was no wonder that then, as afterwards, it should have seemed to Caleb and his companions the key of the whole country. Others were faint-hearted, and held that it was impregnable against any attacks that could be made on it by a people of a *physique* that had suffered from the debasing effects of slavery and untrained to any warlike arts. When they came back to the wilderness of Paran, and told their tale, the people, who had counted on an easy victory, gave way to a cowardly despair, even before the report was brought to its conclusion. They heard the words, "The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great;" and there was an immediate outburst of panic and confusion. Caleb, and at this point in the history he alone, "stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." His associates in the exploration, however, repeated their discouraging reports. The whole work of the Exodus and of Sinai seemed on the point of being frustrated: First, there was the de-

* It seems probable that these were gathered in one of the valleys near Hebron, the district which has, throughout the history of Palestine, been most famous for its vineyards.

spairing wish, "Would God we had died in the land of Egypt! Would God we had died in the wilderness!" Then there was the natural result of that backward look, "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" Then the thought passed into a deliberate purpose, "Let us make a captain, and return into Egypt." And then the two who had not yielded to the first impulse of fear—Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun—stood forward against the madness of the people. They "rent their clothes" in passionate protest against the rebellious cowardice of the people. They testified once more that the land to which they had been sent was an exceeding good land; that the Lord Jehovah was able to bring them into it, and give it them; that the people of the land would be as "bread" for them to devour. They ended with the watchword of all true hero-souls, "The Lord is with us: fear them not." They did this at the risk of their lives. The first famous proselyte was on the point of being also the proto-martyr of Israel, "All the congregation bade stone them with stones."

I do not follow the history of that eventful time, as it affects the lawgiver and the people of Israel. I am concerned at present only with its bearing on the history of the Kenézite convert. And that which strikes us in this respect is the singular pre-eminence given to him in the sentence, partly of condemnation, partly of pardon, of which Moses is made the mouth-piece. Of the people who had tempted the Lord, and had not hearkened to his voice, it was said, "Surely, they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers." And then there came what at first seemed to be (though afterwards the name of

Joshua was added to it) the one solitary exception, "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it." Forty years afterwards, if we accept the narrative of the Book of Deuteronomy as substantially historical, the same testimony was borne in all but the same words, and with the same conspicuous pre-eminence (Deut. i. 36).

During these forty years of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, we get no glimpse of the personal history of the hero-proselyte of the tribe of Judah. One by one he must have seen the generation which had come with him out of Egypt pass away, and another take its place. The Edomite associations which clustered round him, if not his own Edomite descent, must have strengthened the appeal which Moses made to the king of Edom (Num. xx. 14), in the name of his "brother" Israel, for a free and unmolested passage through his territory. If the interpretation of the battle-song from the Book of the Wars of the Lord in Num. xxi. 16, which has been given in a former paper (p. 43), be correct, he must have been among the chieftains of the "lawgiver" tribe who joined in setting the example of zealous labour, digging with their staves, or sceptres, the well which was to supply the wants of the people. He must have taken part in the wars against Sihon and Og, and seen the first great fulfilment of his own words, when the giant population and the fenced cities of Bashan fell before them. When, as the result of that conquest, the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were led to claim a settlement in the

goodly pasture-land which they had thus acquired, instead of crossing over the Jordan, they were reminded by Moses that they were repeating the old sin of which their fathers had been guilty at Kadesh-barnea, and their thoughts were directed to the conduct of "Caleb the *Kenazite*" (a special stress is obviously laid on the alien origin), as a pattern for them to follow (Num. xxxii. 12). The prominence thus given him is heightened by the fact that he, and not the hereditary prince of Judah, is chosen by Moses, before his death, to represent the tribe of Judah in the division of the territory which yet remained to be conquered, and that his name stands at the head of the whole list, the tribe of Judah in his person taking precedence of the others (Num. xxxiv. 19). If we remember that he had seen, and that Moses, so far as we know, had not seen the land in question, the minute description which we find in the same chapter may fairly be thought of as coming from Caleb himself (Num. xxxiv. 1—12).

During the earlier stages of the conquest of Canaan, his name does not appear; but when the time came for dividing the conquered country, the old hero, now at the age of eighty-five, appeared before Joshua and Eleazar, and reminded them of the long-past days of Kadesh-barnea, and of the promise of Moses that the land which his feet had trodden should be his inheritance, because he had "wholly followed the Lord his God." He warmly speaks of himself as one whose strength for war has not yet failed: "Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years. As yet, I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to

come in." And his wishes turn now, as they had done forty-five years before, to that "mountain whereof the Lord spake on that day," to the "great and fenced" city, where dwelt the Anakim, to Hebron, where slept, in the cave of Machpelah, the bones of the three great forefathers of Israel, of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. And so the oldest city of Palestine, perhaps one of the oldest cities in the world, passed into the hand of the Kenezite, precisely on the ground that he, the proselyte, had "wholly followed the Lord" with a more perfect heart than the children of Abraham according to the flesh. A pledge was given, even thus early in the history of the people, that "God was no respecter of persons;" that "many should come from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God."

It is every way noticeable that the city which Caleb asked for still remained to be conquered.* He had to drive thence the three sons of Anak, the chieftains, that is, of the old giant race who made Hebron their head-quarters; and they took refuge in the cities of the Philistine, to meet us once again in the history of Goliath, and the other sons of the giants, with whom David and his followers fought. These are, it will be remembered, distinctly connected with Gath in 1 Sam. xvii. 4, 2 Sam. xxi. 15—22. From Josh. xii. 21—23, we learn that Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, the three Philistine cities, were those in which the Anakim found refuge after

* Josh. x. 36—39, it is true, represents both Hebron and Debir as taken at an earlier period. If we are anxious to reconcile the two statements of a record where there is manifestly so much, both of anticipation and repetition, we must assume that after the first conquest, it fell again into the possession of the Anakim population.

Joshua's conquest. Jerusalem as yet remained in the partial possession of the Jebusites; and this left Hebron in every way the chief city of the tribe. It is significant of the relations that existed between the Kenezite and the priesthood, that it was also assigned, with its suburbs, to the sons of Aaron, to be one of the six "cities of refuge" (Josh. xxi. 13); while the "fields of the city and the villages thereof" were the special inheritance of Caleb. This, however, was not the close of the history of the Kenezite. Another of the same race, probably the younger brother of Caleb, appears on the scene. Another city, near Hebron, Kirjath-Sepher, came within the limits of the territory assigned to him; and this still remained unconquered. Its name (City of Scribes, or City of the Book) seems to indicate that it was the centre of an ancient civilisation, inhabited by some sacerdotal or lettered caste. So Caleb, in his eagerness to gain it, offers the hand of his daughter Achsah to any warrior who shall obtain possession of it, and the prize is claimed by Othniel.* It is followed, as in the striking story, breathing in every word the spirit of a remote antiquity, by the grant with it of the "upper and the nether springs," that the city might not be, in every sense of the word, a barren and unfruitful heritage.

The story, it will be remembered, is twice told. When we meet with it the second time, it is in close conjunction with another fact, and the connection is

* The question whether Othniel was the brother or nephew turns upon the construction of the words, ambiguous in Hebrew as in English, which describe him as "the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother." I follow the interpretation adopted by Lord A. Hervey.

every way significant. "The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law," who had previously pitched their tent on the site of the city of Palm-trees (Jericho), now go with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad, and dwelt among the people (Jud. i.). They were obviously attracted by the presence and power there of the Kenezites, who were so closely connected with them by race, and who with them, but more entirely, had been received into the covenant of Israel. A portion of these Kenites migrated, under Heber, to Kedesh-Naphtali, in the north (Jud. iv. 11); but the greater part remained in the district which they then chose. They are there when Saul bids them separate themselves from the Amalekites, whom he was commissioned to destroy (1 Sam. xv. 6); when David tells Achish that he has included them in the tribes which he attacked to the south of Judah (1 Sam. xxvii. 10); when he sends gifts to them (1 Sam. xxx. 29), before he takes Hebron as the seat of his kingdom. And these are clearly the Kenites, who are connected so closely with the posterity of Caleb, and with the cities of Bethlehem, and Kirjath-jearim, in the genealogical tables of 1 Chron. ii. 50—55, who were represented afterwards by the name of the hermit-prophet who made their race illustrious, Jonadab, the son of Rechab.

But the name of Othniel was destined to be yet more memorable as the first of the *judges* of Israel, the first champion of the people against the oppression of the invader. When the armies of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, swept over the lands, and the people paid the penalty of their apos-

tasy to Baalim and Ashtaroth by eight years of bondage, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him; and he judged Israel and went out to war; and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim into his hand" (Jud. iii. 8—11). The chosen "deliverer" of the people, specially inspired to do the work at once of a ruler and a general, was the Kenezite who, because, like his brother, he had "followed Jehovah wholly," was thought worthy of so high a calling. We cannot wonder that the descendants of one so famous should long have been held in honour. It is interesting to find that, as far down in the history as the period represented by the Book of Judith (the time of Nebuchadnezzar, if we look to the events which it relates—probably of the Maccabees, if we look to the date of its composition), the name of Othniel, under the Grecised form of Gothoniel (Judith vi. 15), should be found among the governors of Bethulia.

The distinct history of the two Kenezites closes with the death of Othniel; but it is clear, as I have already stated, that their posterity exercised a lasting influence on the fortunes of the tribe of Judah, and that they were connected in some way with its chief cities. And when the time came when the other chief house of the tribe of Judah was to rise to a new power, and the rod out of the stem of Jesse first became a great tree, so that the tribes of Israel lodged under the shadow of its branches, it is significant that the first city which David, guided by the high priest's oracular answer (2 Sam. ii. 1), chose as the capital of his kingdom was Hebron, the city of the Kenezites, the city of the priests. His own city Bethlehem was clearly connected by some close ties

with the house of Caleb (1 Chron. ii. 52). So also was Kirjath-jearim, the city where the ark found shelter under the reverent care of Abinadab and Eleazar (1 Sam. vii. 1; 1 Chron. ii. 51). So too were the "scribes that dwelt at Jabez," connected, probably, as the names that follow seems to indicate, with the worship of the Temple.* So, lastly, were the Kenites of the house of Rechab (1 Chron. ii. 53—55).

Two inferences seem to be suggested by the result of this inquiry:—

1. We learn to form a truer estimate of the earlier stages in the history of the people who were to be the religious teachers of mankind. We see how, from the first, instead of being narrow and exclusive, it opened its arms to those who would receive its faith; how the Lord whom they worshipped gave even then to the "sons of the stranger" who were faithful, a place in his inheritance higher than that of the sons of Abraham according to the flesh. The history of Israel thus became, so to speak, a confluent history, gathering together the traditions and the influences of those who followed the great father of the faithful in his witness against the polytheism and idolatry of the nations round them. There were multiplied, in this way, points of contact through which, while still remaining a separate people, they were able to exercise some influence on their immediate neighbours. A gate was thrown open by this admission of the first proselyte to the full prerogatives of Israel, which no man afterwards could shut,

* So in the Vulgate rendering the verse is rendered "the families of the scribes that dwell in Jabesh, that sing and play on instruments of music, and dwell in tabernacles." Comp. the article "Rechabites," in the "Dictionary of the Bible," vol. ii.

which was, in the order of God's providence, to be thrown open more and more widely. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, remote as the connection may at first appear, is the spiritual ancestor of Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, and of Cornelius the centurion.

2. I do not wish to lay any undue stress on a single point of evidence, where there is so much that is cumulative in its nature, so much indirect testimony, so many undesigned coincidences. But it will have been felt, if I mistake not, that the consistency of these scattered notices of a family, not of the race of Israel by birth, found as they are in different portions of the Pentateuch and the Books of Joshua and Judges—a consistency in facts so much below the surface as itself to have escaped the notice of most commentators, while others have refused to admit their true significance, leaves an impression that the books in which they are found cannot be altogether the invention of a later age. Whatever changes of form and structure they may have undergone in the process of what we should call editorship, these notices, and the history in which they are imbedded, are clearly fragments from a remote past. Nothing would have been more unlikely than for the scribes of the time of Samuel, or David, or Hezekiah, or Ezra, to dwell upon the past glories of the families of the Kenezites. But that history, the story of Caleb's faithfulness and its reward, is bound up inseparably, if not with the present form of the Pentateuch, at all events with the substance of its history, with the facts of the Exodus, with the wanderings in the wilderness, with the victories over Canaan. Over and above the ethical lessons which it teaches—and they are deep and fruitful enough to reward

those who take them to their hearts—the history of Caleb the son of Jephunneh may serve to deepen the foundations of the faith of which he was an example, by leaving with us the conviction that here also we have not followed any “cunningly devised fables.”

VI.

THE REVOLT OF ABSALOM.*

THE broad outlines of this dark episode in the life of David are familiar enough to most of us. We trace the righteous retribution by which sin was made the punishment of sin. We see the long, sad procession as it winds up Olivet, the grey, discrowned king weeping as he went. We hear the bitter cry of the father who refuses to be comforted, from whose lips there comes only the long, wailing cry, "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!" The history deserves, however, a closer study. In its causes, its progress, its results, the motives of the chief actors in it, the plots and counterplots which it involved, it brings before us a revolution half-

* It has not been thought necessary in this paper to give references to the chapters (2 Sam. xiii.—xix.) upon which the narrative is based. To do so would have been to encumber the page with them at almost every sentence. They have been given, however, where other passages of Scripture help to explain or illustrate. To another book, for a like reason, it is more convenient to make a general reference at the outset, than to acknowledge step by step the many obligations which I owe to it. What is here attempted is little more than a combination in one narrative of what may be found under the names of persons and places in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," and I can desire nothing better than that the readers of this paper should refer to the articles, chiefly by Dean Stanley and Mr. Grove, to measure for themselves the amount of what I owe to them. A like general acknowledgment must be made to the "Scriptural Coincidences" of the late Professor Blunt.

accomplished, which, if it had been successful, would have changed the whole course and character of Jewish history, which, abortive as it was, was too closely intertwined with the fortunes of the Psalmist King of Israel, and had too prominent a place in the discipline of his life, to be passed over heedlessly.

What was it, we may ask, in the first place, that made such an attempt possible? A king gathering round him, as David had once gathered, the love and sympathy of his people, firm, vigorous, politic, maintaining order and redressing wrongs, would have left no opening for it. If the rash ambition of an impatient prince had prompted him to enter on such an enterprise, it would have been crushed in a moment. It would not have driven the king into exile or endangered the safety of his throne. But the fact may not be concealed, that the character of David had altered for the worse. The dark sin of which he had been guilty spoke of a character that had lost its self-control, its truthfulness, its generosity. His penitence for that sin—true and bitter as the accents of the fifty-first Psalm, and yet more, perhaps, of the thirty-second, prove it to have been—was not able (what repentance is?) to undo all its consequences, and to bring back the old energy and life. Over and above its direct results in alienating (as we shall see) the hearts of his most trusted counsellors, and placing him at the mercy of a hard task-master, that dark hour left behind it the penalty of an enfeebled will, the cowardice of a hidden crime, the remorse which weeps for the past, yet cannot rouse itself to the duties of the present. He leaves the sin of Amnon unpunished, in spite of the fearful promise it gave of a reign of brutal passion, because

"he loved him, for he was his first-born."* Half suspecting, apparently, that Absalom had some scheme for revenging the wrong which he had failed to redress, he has no energy to stop its execution. He shrinks only from being present at a meeting the meaning and issues of which he does not comprehend, and yet dimly fears. When the exaggerated report is brought back that Absalom had slain all his brothers, sure sign, if it had been so, that he was claiming the throne, and marching to it through the blood of his kindred, David's attitude is that of passive, panic-stricken submission. "The king arose, and tore his garments, and lay on the earth." But a greater fault remained, to which, more than to any other, we may trace the alienation of the people. The policy which Absalom adopted could not have been possible but for his father's fatal neglect of the one great duty of an Eastern king—that "sitting in the gate," as he himself had done till lately, as Solomon did after him, to do judgment and justice, to hear the complaints of any, however humble, who had suffered wrong. Failing also, as he did, to appoint any representative to take his place, it was no wonder that the hearts of the people should turn to one who had the cleverness to offer his own services to fill up the gap which they felt so keenly. Partly absorbed, it may be, in the plans and preparations for the Temple which he was not to build (2 Sam. vii. 2, 13; 1 Chron. xxix. 2), partly looking to the future, with a sad foreboding of the evils which the prophet had foretold (2 Sam. xii. 11),

* The words of the Septuagint Greek translation of 2 Sam. xiii. 21, made about the year B.C. 271, and implying, of course, a Hebrew original then extant.

he shut himself up in the recesses of his palace. No public procession or state ceremonial gave Absalom any opportunity to see him (2 Sam. xiv. 28). None but priests and ministers of state had access to him. The influence of Joab and Bathsheba was paramount. Not the armies of Israel, but the Cherethites and Pelethites, mercenary troops of alien origin, were his chosen body-guard. Foreigners, Ammonites (1 Chron. xi. 39), men of Gath (2 Sam. xv. 19), Archites (Ibid. 32), Moabites (1 Chron. xi. 34), were among his commanders and counsellors. We cannot wonder that the national, the military, the lay feeling of the people should be stirred up against a king who must have seemed to them given up to the influence of priests and prophets, of foreigners and women.

On the other side, there was a rival with all that could fascinate the affection of an Eastern people. A kingly grace and beauty seem indeed to have been hereditary in the family of Jesse. The elder brothers of David, if the prophet had looked only on the outward appearance, might each have seemed worthy of a kingdom (1 Sam. xvi. 6). David himself was "ruddy and of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (1 Sam. xvi. 12). Adonijah is described afterwards as "very goodly" (1 Kings i. 6). Solomon, if we may apply to him in their first historical meaning the language of the Song of Songs, must have been the "standard bearer," the "chiefest among ten thousand," the "altogether lovely" (Song of Sol. v. 10, 16). But Absalom bore away the palm even in that noble race. "In all Israel there was none to be praised for his beauty" like him. "From the sole of his foot even to the

crown of his head there was no blemish in him." The child of a marriage which it had been the policy of David to contract during his reign at Hebron, in order to secure the alliance of a neighbouring prince, the King of Geshur, he was, so far as we know, the only son of David who, on his mother's as well as his father's side, belonged to a royal house (2 Sam. iii. 3), and so far he started with this advantage even over his two elder brothers. The very name which David gave him (Absalom—father of peace), almost identical in meaning with that which was afterwards given to Solomon, indicated the hopes with which his birth was hailed, and prepare us for the deep, tender love which was shown even to the end.

Of his life up to the time of the dark and shameful history of Amnon's guilt we know but little. It lay in the nature of the case that he should bear some part in his father's victories over neighbouring nations. The young, handsome hero, with his long, flowing hair, golden yet dark, it may be, like his father's (1 Sam. xvi. 12) and his brother's (Song of Sol. v. 11), must have been conspicuous among the soldiers of Israel, who told with wonder of "his exceeding beauty," of the very weight of his bushy, streaming locks. He must have taken his place among the sons of David who were "chief rulers," to whom, if we give the Hebrew word the meaning which it usually bears, were assigned some functions more or less liturgical in solemn ceremonials (2 Sam. viii. 18).^{*} He married, probably about the age of twenty, and had three sons and one daughter. The

^{*} The Hebrew word *Cohanim*, elsewhere translated *Priests*, is here, in the Authorised Version, rendered "chief rulers." See, however, the article "Priests," in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

sons are not named, probably as having died in their infancy (2 Sam. xviii. 18). The daughter inherited her father's beauty, and was named after his much-loved sister, Tamar (2 Sam. xiv. 27). But at the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, he found himself with no son upon whom his hopes could fasten. There is something piteous in the sense of bereavement which leads him to cheat his sorrow with the vision of a posthumous fame. Absalom's pillar pointed, we may well believe (2 Sam. xviii. 18), as it rose in the king's dale, to the secret source of his ambition and his crimes. He had been denied the blessings which fall to a father's lot, and had no son to "keep his name in remembrance." The strongest yearning of an Israelite's heart was thrown back upon itself, after a short-lived joy, and his feelings towards his own father were turned to bitterness and hate.

The revenge which he took for the foul wrong that his sister had suffered at the hands of Amnon, did not shock the men of Israel as it shocks us. To him, by the feeling of all Oriental nations, belonged the special guardianship of her honour: and subtly as the punishment was inflicted, it was nothing more than the monstrous turpitude of the guilt deserved. Had David been truer to his kingly calling, instead of passing the crime over with a weak sorrow, and a yet weaker leniency, there would have been no occasion for the vengeance which Absalom felt himself forced to take. The two long years of waiting which followed on his revenge, must have been a time in which disappointment, irritation, bitterness against his father, were gaining, slowly but surely, the mastery over him. As it was, the death of

Amnon left him (with the exception of Chileab, the son of Abigail, who never appears to have been in any way conspicuous (2 Sam. iii. 3), the eldest of the royal house, and yet there is forced upon him a life of exile. *We* know, indeed, through the record of the sacred historian, how his father's heart yearned to go forth after Absalom, but it does not follow that Absalom himself knew it. All that came to his knowledge, it may be, was the fact that the whole nation was complaining of his father's harshness in not bringing back his "banished one," that it was necessary to have recourse to schemes, and disguises, and parables, as in the case of the widow of Tekoah, to bend the sternness of his resolve; that when he did return, there was no welcome such as might have opened once again the fountains of a filial love, nothing but the cold command, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." The motive of David may have been the wish to carry further the discipline of disapproval, to wait till his son was more manifestly penitent. The end showed how fatal that policy of expectation was, how terribly it added bitterness to the sense of alienation that had already been growing only too strong within him.

It must have been even more difficult for him, as it is at first for us, to understand the conduct of Joab in this matter. At one time he is doing everything to bring Absalom back, at another he will not even see him, and meets his advances with a contemptuous silence. The contradiction was, however, apparent only. Cruel, unscrupulous, crafty, the policy of Joab, however tortuous it might seem, was directed always to but one end. To make him-

self great, powerful, indispensable, was the object of his life. He had already gained a tyrannous power over the enfeebled king by his complicity in the murder of Uriah, and knew well how to use to the utmost the influence which the possession of that fatal secret gave him. Might he not, as seeming to be the only depository of power, bring Absalom also to his feet, and make him beg and sue for favour? It is not till he finds that he has miscalculated, and that he has to deal with a character wild, impulsive, passionate, that he deems it necessary to change his course. It would not do to irritate a prince who did not hesitate to burn the standing crops of his father's ministers, if his wishes were not complied with. At last, after two years of waiting, two years of silence, misunderstanding, jealousy, the breach is, outwardly at least, healed. The father and the son met once more, with all outward tokens of reverence on the one side, the son "bowing himself on his face to the ground," with a truer sign in the father's kiss of returning love upon the other. It was, however, too late. The mischief had been already done, and had become incurable. Accustomed to think of himself as the heir to the throne, Absalom must have seen with alarm the growing love of David for Solomon, his latest born, the indications that Solomon, and not himself, under the training of Nathan and Bathsheba (2 Sam. xii. 25; Prov. iv. 3), was destined to be David's successor. It would not do to wait any longer. It was necessary to play a bolder game, if the prize was to be a crown.

II.

The first sign of the new course to which Absalom had now committed himself was, as has been said, one which, but for the devout apathy into which David had apparently fallen, would have been impossible. To gather round him both the state and the strength of kingly power, the chariots and horses which gave him at once the nucleus of an army, the fifty men who served as a king's body-guard, this was with Absalom, as afterwards with Adonijah (1 Kings i. 5), the first symptom of rebellion. It would have roused a jealous or an energetic ruler to immediate action. But the ground was left open, as we have seen, for yet bolder approaches to the desired end. Inheriting the gifts of ready sympathy and kindly speech, which had once made David the idol of the nation (1 Sam. xviii. 5), he presented himself to the people as the redresser of their wrongs. Day by day he was to be seen, in the early dawn, where the king ought to have been and was not, in the "open place" at the "entering in of the gate," listening to every tale of wrong, pointing to his father's neglect as the source of all the sufferings of the people; "None will hear thee, from the king downward;" holding out the hope of a better time when he, if he were made judge, would do justice to all men, winning, soothing, caressing, "stealing the hearts of the men of Israel."

For some months, till the end of the third year after his return to Jerusalem, the game was played out steadily. At last the hour long waited for had come—the plot was ripe. Seizing, probably, on the

very religiousness of the king as an instrument for his destruction, he assumed himself the character of a devotee. He, too, following his father's example, had vowed a vow unto Jehovah in the time of his affliction (Ps. cxxxii. 1), and that vow must be performed. With a subtle refinement of hypocrisy, he pretended that his thank-offering was for his return to Jerusalem. Strange as it may seem to us that Hebron, not Jerusalem, was to be the scene of the fulfilment of his vow, the circumstances of Absalom's life might well remove that strangeness in the eyes of David. In the unsettled state of the early years of the monarchy, it had probably been customary to offer sacrifices wherever the king might be; and the religion of Absalom's youth had been formed at a time when Hebron was the royal city (2 Sam. v. 5). Many sacred associations gathered round it. It was a priestly city, a city of refuge (Josh. xxi. 11—13), the city of the "oak" of Mamre (Gen. xiv. 13), and the cave of Machpelah (Gen. xxiii. 9). The king, at any rate was known to have given his consent. Absalom might go as openly and with as many followers as he might choose, without exciting suspicion. He had accordingly invited, besides those on whom he could count as the ready instruments of the sudden *coup d'état* which he had planned, two hundred men, representatives probably of the chief families of Judah, who went with him "in their simplicity," as if to witness the performance of some stately sacrifice,—in reality entrapped, to be won over, if that were possible, to his cause, and, if not, to be held as hostages to enforce compliance with his demands. In the meantime messengers who were in the secret were sent through the tribes of Israel,

and at a given signal were to raise the cry, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron."

At this stage of the history a new character appears on the scene, and one whose part in it is a conspicuous one. "Absalom sent for Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counsellor." Some previous concert is of course implied in that sending. The counsellor, the companion, the familiar friend of David would otherwise have been the last man to whom the rebel prince would have entrusted the secret of his conspiracy. The greater his reputation for counsel, "as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God," the more would Absalom have shrunk from all contact with him, unless he had been well assured that that counsel was at his service. The motives of Ahithophel for this strange desertion of his master we are left to conjecture. There may have been jealousy of Joab, or the natural tendency to worship the rising instead of the setting sun, or the impatience of a hypocrite at the round of religious services in which he was compelled to bear a part, affecting a devotion which he did not feel (Ps. lv. 13, 14). But deeper than all these, there was, we may well believe, the rankling sense of the shame of a dishonoured house, the desire to revenge the double guilt which had been the occasion of that dishonour. Ahithophel was the father of Eliam, one of the thirty-seven in David's chosen band of warriors (2 Sam. xxiii. 4). To that band Uriah, the Hittite, also had belonged (2 Sam. xviii. 39,) and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, was the daughter of Eliam, and therefore the grand-daughter of Ahithophel (2 Sam. xi. 3). Whatever secrecy might shroud the guilt of David from the eyes of the people, it could hardly

have remained unknown to the friend who shared his inmost thoughts, who must have watched wonderingly the outbursts of passionate repentance which followed on the reproof of Nathan (2 Sam. xii. 15, 21). And for Ahithophel at least, the subsequent elevation of Bathsheba gave no satisfaction. She might acquiesce in her own dishonour. He could not forgive the king who had murdered his son's friend, and had made his son's daughter an adulteress. We may trace in the counsel which he gave subsequently, a vindictive exultation. The king should suffer *in kind* as he had made others suffer. His remembrance of the words of Nathan may have been instrumental in bringing about their fulfilment (2 Sam. xii. 11; xvi. 22).

His adhesion to the cause of Absalom was, at any rate, accepted as the surest pledge of its success. "The conspiracy was strong;" fresh adherents flocked in from all sides. In the palace at Jerusalem there was terror and dismay. The king heard that the people had gone after Absalom, and could not count on any adequate defence. The one command he had to give to those who yet remained faithful, was the cry of alarm, "Arise, and let us flee." The members of his household, the inmates of his harem (Bathsheba and Solomon must have been among them), followed him as he left the city. Ten women only of the latter were left, probably because they would have encumbered him in his flight (comp. 2 Sam. xi. 33), in charge of the palace. In the midst of the general desertion, there were, however, some who remained faithful. The priests, raised to a new position by the policy of David, and looking forward to the completion of the new temple, for

which he was year by year accumulating treasures; the mercenary troops, chiefly of Philistine origin, attached to the person of the king, partly by the real affection with which he still inspired those who were in close contact with him, partly by the foreign origin which cut them off from the national sympathies of Israel, and made them dependent on his favour; these, at any rate, remained steadfast. Unexpected proofs of fidelity came to comfort and sustain him.

Looked at from one point of view, the conduct of David at this crisis might appear wanting in energy and manliness. He does not act as most Eastern kings would have acted, resolved to crush the rebellion or to perish. Interpreted by the words which remain to tell us of the inner workings of his soul, we may see in it the calm submission of a penitent to the discipline appointed for him. He has sinned. This is the penalty of his sin, and he must bear it. Out of this temper, so strikingly contrasted with the hot eagerness of his youth (1 Sam. xxv. 22), there grows a strange gentleness, an unselfish considerateness for others, a winning and saintly meekness which has hardly a parallel to it in the history of Israel, which draws near to the highest pattern of all patient and meek endurance. He is reluctant to draw into the partnership of his dangers the foreigners who might otherwise find a home in their own country. His offer to release them from their ties had, as we might expect, the effect of making them firmer and more loyal than before. The words of Ittai of Gath speak of a heart roused to unwonted nobleness: "In what place my lord the king shall be, whether in life or death, even there also will thy

servant be." He will not repeat the sin of which the Israelites under Hophni and Phinehas had once been guilty (1 Sam. iv. 3), and expose the sacred Ark to the risk of warfare. He has risen above the low forms of faith which saw in it a talisman ensuring victory, and has received the truth of which it bore witness, the truth of an Unseen Ruler guiding men with a loving hand through the changes and chances of their life. Solemnly, therefore, with all his reverence for the symbol and for the ritual which gathered round it, he sends back the procession of Priests and Levites. The worship of the Tabernacle shall not cease. The city shall retain that which made it holy. If it is the will of Jehovah to restore him, he will return to both.

We catch, however, at this moment a glimpse into a policy of something besides mere resignation. The priests remaining in Jerusalem may render him more service than by following him into the wilderness. Abiathar, as High Priest, possessed the Urim and the Thummim, and through them was gifted with a supernatural insight. Zadok, also, was a seer, divining plans and schemes with a marvellous acuteness, even in their earliest stages. If they could remain in Jerusalem, apparently content to acquiesce in Absalom's usurpation, much might come to their knowledge which would be useful for David's guidance. Their two sons, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, and Jonathan of Abiathar, might, without much risk, act as messengers to carry the information.

Without the ark, therefore, looking on the priests as they bore it back over the brook of Kidron, the king began the ascent of Olivet. Weeping, bare-foot, his head shrouded in his mantle, followed by

men imitating him in these outward signs of woe, he and those who shared his flight made their way up the hill. It was as one long funeral procession of men wailing over the fall of all their hopes, not knowing what evil more terrible than any that had preceded it might come next.


The tidings which at this period reached David, that Ahithophel had joined the revolt, made the danger more formidable than ever. He met them with the prayer which showed how much he dreaded the subtle wiliness of his confidential minister: "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." He met them also with a policy which showed that he could fight that subtlety with its own weapons; that the quick resource, the promptitude in act which had distinguished his youth, were not yet departed. At the very moment when he was halting in his march, "to worship God" (a striking indication of the tenor of his hidden life), there came up another counsellor, second only in authority and in ability to Ahithophel, occupying, under the title of the king's friend, a position not unlike that of the chief vizier of a sultan or caliph. Like others of David's chosen officers, like Uriah and Ittai, he was probably a stranger and a proselyte, and bound both by interest and attachment to the fortunes of the king. As it was, he came as one who saw in the king's flight a great personal calamity, with his linen robe rent, with dust sprinkled on his hair, as if death had fallen on his first-born. The king, however, saw in him one who could effectually aid in working the counterplot of which the two priests were to be the leaders. Hushai, in the council-chamber of Absalom,

fighting treachery with treachery, betraying all he heard to Zadok and Abiathar, would render service incalculably greater than anything which could be gained by his presence in the field, or by his sharing David's exile. He, too, was to return to Jerusalem and welcome Absalom with a simulated loyalty.

Strange union, this, of faith, meekness, patience, such as we think of as belonging to the noblest temper, with falsehood, artifice, dissimulation, worthy of the meanest. Slowly in the character of any people, more slowly still in that of any Eastern people, most slowly of all, perhaps, in that of Israel, have men risen to the excellence of veracity. We must not think that the king's religion was a hypocrisy because it did not bear at once the fruit of the spotless honour and unswerving truth which mark the highest forms of Christian goodness. The Christian Church herself has to notice many like inconsistencies among her crowned martyrs. If Alfred and St. Louis were free from them, they appear in men whom we must yet respect—in men whose trials were like those of David, in Charles I. of England, in Louis XVI. of France.

The arrival of Ziba, as they reached the brow of the hill, brought at once a fresh succour and a fresh trouble. In Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the king found one who reminded him of the best and brightest friendship of his youth. Lamed irremediably in his infancy, there seemed no fear of rivalry. He was a constant guest at the palace. The readiness and humility with which he accepted his position, leaving, for the sake of it, the home which he had found with one of the chieftains of the

Gilead country, seem to indicate that he inherited something of his father's loving admiration for the son of Jesse (2 Sam. ix. 1—13). Now, according to the story which Ziba brought, he had shown himself treacherous and false. In the general disturbance of the revolt, there might be a party, adherents of the old dynasty, willing to restore the kingdom to him, as its nearest representative. We know that afterwards Mephibosheth indignantly denied the charge, and pleaded his lameness as accounting for his remaining at Jerusalem. In the absence of any other evidence, we have simply to set the word of the master against that of the servant, and to judge by their previous history. That of Ziba does not dispose us to place much confidence in him. Originally a slave in the house of Saul, he had risen upon its overthrow, had apparently taken possession virtually of the lands of Saul, had amassed a fortune, appeared as a man of some dignity in the tribe of Benjamin, could boast of fifteen sons and twenty slaves (2 Sam. ix. 10). By David's recall of Mephibosheth, and the grant to him of the lands he would have inherited from his father, Ziba fell back to his old *status*. As a slave, he could hold no property in his own right. All that belonged to him came once again under the ownership of the son of Jonathan. There was everything to tempt such a man to make a bold stroke to extricate himself from a position so irritating. The strong interest which he had in blackening the character of Mephibosheth deprives his testimony of all value. It is utterly unsupported by anything in the previous or later history of the slandered prince. The supplies which Ziba brought with him were, however, as we may well imagine,



eagerly accepted. Wine, bread, fruit (probably the fresh young figs of the early summer), these were welcome enough to those who had been forced to exchange the luxury of the king's palace for the rough life of the wilderness. In his gratitude for this service, in the impulse of his indignation against the baseness and ingratitude of one whom he had so cherished, David fell into the trap which Ziba had so artfully set for him. The estates of the house of Saul were cheaply purchased by the slave with the two asses and their burden of provisions, of which he had robbed Mephibosheth.

The roads to the Jordan valley, which they had now to take, led them through the territory of Benjamin, and as the fugitives passed along one slope of a ravine, they were seen by one Shimei of Bahurim, who, like other members of the house of Saul, had never forgotten or forgiven the transfer of sovereignty to the house of Jesse and the rival tribe of Judah. Surrounded by his friends and fellow-chieftains of the Benjamites, shouting out across the narrow gorge, he cursed, as none but an Oriental can curse, with a foul-mouthed bitterness which David could never forget, and which, even after he had once forgiven it, came back upon his thoughts, eight years afterwards, in the hour of death, as demanding vengeance. Words of the vilest reproach—"man of blood, man of Belial," murderer and scoundrel—were hurled at the king's head. Tone and gesture gave a malignant sharpness to the cry, "Off with you!—off with you!" He taunted the king with shedding the blood of the house of Saul, and exulted over his present downfall. Words were not enough. Seizing the stones and dust that lay on his side of the ravine, he hurled

them at David as he passed, as long as the roads continued parallel with each other.

On David's side of the gorge there were divided counsels. Abishai, the rough soldier, meets reviling with reviling. As he had once before urged David on to the murder of Saul, so his first impulse is to take vengeance now. He will dart down, rush to the other side and bring back the head of the "dead dog" (no word of scorn could go further) who had thus dared to curse the king. Here the better side of David's character comes out. With a phrase which, repeated as it is afterwards, seems to have been an habitual, almost a proverbial expression of impatience, he answers simply, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?" In the profound feeling that nothing happened by chance—that all that was falling on him—the greater evil of his son's disloyalty, the lesser evil of the Benjamite's curse—were part of the punishment he had deserved, of the discipline which he needed—he does not shrink from speaking even of those foul reproaches as coming in some sense from God. "The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." Now that the curse has come, the lesson which it teaches is, for the time, at least, patience and forbearance. That may win favour while anger will but increase his guilt. "It may be that the Lord will look on mine afflictions, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day."

So the travellers went on. The roads diverged. The curses died away. The stones fell short of their aim. The evening closed on that long day of weariness and sorrow—the dreariest day that David

had ever known; and he and the partners of his exile rested for the night. The loaves, and fruit, and wine of Ziba's bringing must have formed their evening meal.

We have seen during the day the changes of mood and feeling, mostly noble and true, sometimes not wholly free from blame, which passed over David's soul. It is given to us to enter, as in the watches of the night, into the inner sanctuary of his heart, and to see, with a distinctness which has hardly any parallel in the history of other dethroned or suffering kings,* the process of purification. In Psalms which the freest criticism of our own time,† not less than the traditions of the Jewish Church, assigns to this period, almost to this very day of David's life, we hear the prayer which followed that day of shame, that short and broken rest. It is no bold imagining to think of him as waking, after his manner, before the first streaks of light were seen in the eastern grey, preventing the very "night watches" of the dawning day (Ps. xlii. 6), and seizing on the hour of calm before the second day's march began, to think out, and it may be to write, the hymn which was to carry comfort through well-nigh three thousand years to the hearts of sufferers. Every word of that third Psalm speaks with a wonderful distinctness of the facts of the previous day's experience. He thought of the conspiracy that had grown so suddenly to a head. "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? many are they that rise

* The Icon Basilike, the "royal portraiture" of Charles I., with its prayers, meditations, aspirations, would be the nearest approach, if it had been written by Charles.

† Ewald's "Poetical Books of the Old Testament," ii. p. 37.

up against me." He thought of Shimei's taunt that he was at last forsaken by Jehovah. "Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." But not the less did his faith continue firm and fixed. More than his victories over Philistines and Edomites, more than his kingly state, that yesterday of flight and ignominy had taught him that he was under the care of an unseen Protector. "But Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, and the lifter up of my head." If he had sent the ark, the token of Jehovah's presence, back to the tabernacle on the holy hill of Zion, stronger than ever was his assurance that the Lord, "out of that holy hill," had hearkened to his prayers. Sleep had come with its power to refresh and calm. "I laid me down and slept, for the Lord sustained me." The mercies of the past hours were a pledge for the day that was now dawning, with all its unknown chances and calamities. "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." To that Protector he commits himself: "Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God." It is as though the victory were already won, as though that unseen Arm had "smitten his enemies on the cheek-bone," had "broken the teeth of the ungodly." The last thought before the toils of the day began, was that "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people."

We may for a moment anticipate the order of events, in order to bring the close of that day into its true relation to the beginning. The fourth Psalm is as manifestly a hymn for evening, as the third was for the break of day. The sameness of the words used, "I will lay me down in peace and

sleep," is evidence that they were separated from each other by the shortest possible interval. The difference of the tense shows what that interval was. And here, too, we have words which go back to the special forms of suffering which we have been tracing. Still his thoughts turn on the curses of Shimei and his crew, and the treachery of Ahithophel. "O ye sons of men!" (the word is one of ironical honour rather than open contempt) "O ye princes and chieftains, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?" For them, if his words could reach them as they were lying down to rest in the pride of their successful plots, his counsel would be, "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." Let the watches of the night be given to self-searching, let the voice of scorn and reviling be hushed in silence. Then, when that scrutiny and solemn awe have done their work, and repentance comes, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord." Others, friends, but timorous and half-hearted, might ask the question, "Who will show us any good?" with no certain hope of an answer. David has learnt that the answer comes when God "lifts up the light of his countenance." Looking back either to the time when he, according to the fashion of Eastern kings, had shared with his people the rejoicings of the harvest and the vintage, or, more probably, to the time so recent when Ziba's welcome gifts had refreshed his weary, travel-worn companions and himself, he has to tell of a more abiding source of joy, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine in-

creased." Once again he can welcome slumber, "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

III.

Jerusalem had been abandoned by the king to the mercies of the rebel prince. The great body of the inhabitants acquiesced, it would seem, in the transfer of power with not even the show of resistance. David had been followed only by his own household, and by the foreign mercenaries, and the latter had probably as little favour with the mob of Jerusalem as the Swiss body-guard of the French kings had with the mob of Paris. The flight of David had done little to enlist their sympathy. It must have seemed to them almost as ignominious as that of James II. from Whitehall seemed to our fathers, or that of Louis Philippe from the Tuileries to the present generation of Frenchmen. To those who were not in the secret the presence of Zadok, Abiathar, Hushai, not less than that of Ahithophel, must have seemed a recognition, on the part of high priests and minister, of the new regime. This rush of homage from the courtiers of a fallen king startled even Absalom himself. Ahithophel's conduct in supporting him he could understand, but that of Hushai, meeting him with the great Eastern form of our "God save the King;" "May the King live, —may the King live!" this all but revolted him. Was this the kindness and the loyalty which were due at once to the king, and to the friend? The simulated baseness of the Archite, however, answered its purpose. He was ready to raise the constant cry of

time-servers and turn-coats in times of change, *Le Roi est mort, Vive le Roi!* He acknowledged the king *de facto*. After the manner of Eastern thought, he pretended to see in Absalom one whom "Jehovah, and his people" (*i.e.*, the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem), "and all the men of Israel" had chosen. "His will I be, and him will I serve." "As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence."


There was, however, one exception in the midst of this rush of real or apparent traitors, and it is one to which writers of Jewish history have, for the most part, done but scanty justice. One there was who would not desert the exiled king—who would not welcome and bow down before his rebel son. At the very hour when David, too easily accepting Ziba's slanderous tale, was reducing him to shame and poverty, he, the crippled son of Jonathan, was doing all he could in proof of his faithfulness and love. At a time when such a course could bring on him nothing but the frowns and disfavour of the courtiers of the new king, he assumed the dress and the demeanour of one who mourns as for a father and a friend. Strange and spectral among the guests that now tenanted the king's palace must have been that apparition of the pale, lame form of Mephibosheth, still compelled, it would seem, to eat at the king's table, but coming there with unwashed garments, and feet bare and squalid, and shaggy and neglected beard. Far enough from that poor cripple must have been all thought of raising a party, and gaining a crown in the midst of the confusion. Much rather may we see in him, one in whom, different as he was in outward form and circumstance,

there dwelt the very spirit, noble, loyal, true-hearted, of his father Jonathan, the love which had been wonderful and true, perpetuated even after death, and, as it were, reviving in the son.

The first act of Absalom on taking possession of the city was one from which the conscience of Christian readers recoils as from an unutterable baseness. Acting on the counsel of Ahithophel, prompted, as we have seen, as that counsel was by intense vindictiveness, the son, merging all duties in the rights of a conqueror, took possession of the father's harem.

Strange and startling as it may seem, that deed of shame met with no resistance. No voice was heard uttering its clamorous protest. Jerusalem and all Israel heard of it, and were as ready to follow Absalom as before. To them it seemed only a master-stroke of policy. They saw in it only the last insult, making all compromise and reconciliation impossible.

The fact is a significant one. It has to be borne in mind when we would take measure of the long laborious task of the priests and yet more of the prophets of Israel in the moral education of the people. True it was that such accursed unions had been forbidden in the strongest terms in the law given from Sinai, but that law had become obsolete, was apparently little known, and seldom read, and the people had sunk in this as in other things to the level of the Canaanite nations whom they had suffered to remain among them. So little after all did the teaching of the Prophets avail, that two centuries afterwards the self-same sin was again common in Israel, taking its place among the transgressions for



which Jehovah would not "turn away the punishment thereof" (Amos ii. 7). So, at any rate, it was now. The counsel of Ahithophel was, in the language of the Historian, "as if a man had inquired at the *word* or oracle of God," was, *i.e.*, preternaturally wise, even if also it was preternaturally wicked. It placed Absalom and the people in a position from which there was no retreat.

The malignity of Ahithophel was, however, not yet satiated. He had avenged the dishonour of Bathsheba. He had still to avenge the murder of Uriah. With hardly an hour's delay he urges an immediate pursuit. He himself will head it. They will light on the fugitives while they are yet "weary and weak-handed." He himself too with his own hands will thrust his sword into the heart of the one man for whose blood he thirsts. "I will smite the king only; and I will bring back all the people unto thee." The scheme was all but adopted, and, if adopted, we can hardly doubt that it would have been successful. But the time was come for Hushai to play his part. In a speech of unusual length as compared with the pointed brevity of most Biblical dialogues, he advocated a policy of delay. David and his followers were men of war, trained in all its arts. They might be in ambush and obtain a victory in some sudden skirmish. That victory would be magnified by report. Panic would spread through the army of Absalom, and it would be difficult to gather fresh recruits. It was better therefore to get together a great army of all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and to take the field in force. Then, in open battle, they were sure of success; or, if the king took refuge in some fortified city, they could

lay siege to it after the fashion of the time, and pull down the walls and towers, stone by stone.

The advice had a show of prudence. It came from one of David's most experienced counsellors, supposed to be above all others acquainted with his character. The confident assumption of superior wisdom in tone and word added weight to the argument. The votes of the council passed over to him. He gained the delay which was wanted for the counter-revolution.

One result of this victory was the disappearance from the scene of the arch-traitor. Whether it was simply the mortification of finding himself second only where he had counted on being first, the sting of the defeat now being that it was the continuance in the council-chamber of Absalom of a long-standing rivalry that had begun in the council-chamber of David, or whether (as seems more likely) it was the loss of the moment of revenge, in the hope of which he had plunged so deep in guilt—this we know not. All that we see is the first suicide in the history of the Bible;* that solitary ride from Jerusalem to Giloh, in which mortification wrought itself into remorse, and remorse into frenzy, till at last the blackness of darkness settled on his soul, and then, with calm deliberate purpose, he "put his household in order, and hanged himself and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

We cannot wonder that men should have seen in such a fate a parallel at once to the guilt and the self-murder of the great traitor to a yet holier and

* The death of Saul, already "sorely wounded," and seeking only to hasten by one short hour, the otherwise inevitable end, and so to escape the equally inevitable outrage and torture of the Philistines, can hardly be considered an exception to this statement.

diviner friendship. If, as is at least probable, we may ascribe to this period of David's life the three Psalms (lv., lxix., cix.) which manifestly fit into it with a wonderful adaptation, we have in them the measure of the grief, bitter, poignant, burning, which the treachery caused to the soul of David.

"It was not an enemy that reproached me ;
 Then I could have borne it.
 Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself
 against me ;
 Then I would have hid myself from him.
 But it was thou, a man mine equal,
 My guide and mine acquaintance.
 We took sweet counsel together,
 And walked unto the house of God as friends."
 Psalm lv. 12—14.

Well might the sharp feeling of wrong, sharper than a serpent's tooth, utter itself in words in which we hear at once the belief that evil must fall upon the evil-doer, and the prayer that it may fall, and that God's righteous order may so fulfil itself.

"Pour out thine indignation upon them,
 And let thy wrathful displeasure take hold on them.
 Let their habitation be desolate ;
 And let none dwell in their tents."
 Psalm lxix. 24, 25.

"For my love they are my adversaries :
 But I give myself unto prayer.
 And they have rewarded me evil for good,
 And hatred for my love.
 Set thou a wicked man over him :
 And let the adversary stand at his right hand."
 Psalm cix. 4—6.

The words meet us, as we know, once again. They were present to the mind of the Master and his disciples as they spoke of the treachery of Judas. Here, too, there had been closest companionship followed by blackest ingratitude. Here, too, remorse

came too late, and was but the agony of conscious guilt and baffled expectations.

We must return from these more solemn thoughts to the plots and counter-plots at Jerusalem. While Ahithophel was journeying to Giloh, the two priestly youths, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the first of them already famous for his speed, were making their way across the country on a very different errand. They were to carry tidings, it will be remembered, from the high priests to the king. But it would not be safe for the sons of the high priests to be seen leaving the city, and they therefore kept outside the walls—at En-rogel (“the fountain of treading”), the resort, it would seem, then as now, of women who came to draw water, or to wash clothes after the Eastern fashion by treading on them as they lay in the running stream. As soon as Hushai had carried his point, he went to inform Zadok and Abiathar of his success. This, of course, he might do without suspicion, but the next step required caution. Neither the high priests nor any of their order might be seen going on their secret errand to the place of meeting. A message therefore was sent by some unknown female slave, whose presence among the other women of the city would, it was thought, occasion no inquiry. Even as it was, however, the precautions were not enough, and their work was nearly frustrated. A boy recognised the two sons of Aaron in the place of their concealment, and carried word to Absalom. Happily, it came too late. The active young priests had already started on their way, and had got as far as Bahurim, before they heard the footsteps of their pursuers on their track. By a strange coincidence, they found kind-

ness and shelter in the very spot where David had encountered only the revilings of Shimei. Those very revilings had, it may be, helped to rouse in more kindly natures, feelings of reverence and sympathy; and the woman of Bahurim was ready without a moment's hesitation to conceal the two messengers, because they had an errand to the king. For them to scramble down the sides of the cistern-well, for her to cover the mouth with its usual lid, and the lid with a large heap of bruised corn, was the work of an instant. When the pursuers came with the eager panting question, "Where are Jonathan and Ahimaaz?" they were met with the half-comic equivocation, "They are gone over a little pool of water!" and finding they had lost their scent, they went back to Jerusalem. As soon as they were out of sight, of course, the two couriers emerged from their hiding-place and made their way to David.

The news which they brought had obviously been eagerly waited for. Upon it was to turn the decision as to his future plans. If there was to be an immediate pursuit, the only course open to him was to find what refuge he could in the hill country of Gilead, or in the mountains of Ephraim, and there, in some safe cavern, to renew the old life of Adullam. The words of the 55th Psalm, already seen to have grown out of this period of his history, gave utterance also to this feeling, the earnest, passionate longing for simple rest and safety.

"Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
And horror hath overwhelmed me;
And I said, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove,
For then would I flee away, and be at rest.
Lo, then would I wander far off,
And remain in the wilderness.'"

As it was, however, the skill of Hushai had secured for him the delay which was so precious. It was now possible to gain a fortified city, and find time to gather round him a fresh army. He and his companions, including the body-guard of the Cherethites and Pelethites, crossed the Jordan and made their way to Mahanaim.

IV.

In the absence of distinct information in the records now extant, probably only fragments from a fuller history, we are left to conjecture what length of time elapsed before the closing scenes of the drama, and how it was employed by Absalom and his followers at Jerusalem. There was, at any rate, a solemn ceremonial anointing (2 Sam. xix. 2), in which we are almost compelled to think of Zadok and Abiathar as taking their ministerial part. Some weeks must have passed while the messengers of the new king were speeding over all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, to bid the tribes of the north and the south rally round his standard. Over the army so collected, a new general was appointed—Amasa, connected, on his mother's side, with the house of David, but belonging on his father's to the wilder race of Ishmael (1 Chron. ii. 17). How well fitted he was for the work with which he was now entrusted we may judge from the fact that when the revolt was crushed, David saw in him one who was able to take Joab's place, and enable him to throw off the subjugation which was becoming more and more intolerable.

Of David's progress at Mahanaim, we have fuller

details. There were many grounds which may have led to his preference of that city over the other towns on the Gilead side of the Jordan. From its name ("The Two Camps" *), we may infer, as in the parallel cases of our English *-casters* and *-chesters*, that it was well fortified. For seven years and a half it had enabled Ishbosheth to hold out against the growing strength of David (2 Sam. ii. 8). At first, indeed, it might seem as if this very fact would have been against the king's choice. The Gilead tribes had been firm supporters of the son of Saul, and they might have been expected to look with dislike on his successful opponent—to exult, as Shimei exulted, in his present calamity. There were, however, facts on the other side sufficient to outweigh these objections. At the very commencement of his reign, David had specially courted the favour of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, one of the leading cities of the district, thanking them for the zeal which they had shown in rescuing the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from the hands of the Philistines (2 Sam. ii. 5). The victory over the Ammonites, the capture of their royal city Rabbah, must have been welcomed by the Gileadites as freeing them from the attacks of a neighbour who had been formidable before, and required to be kept constantly in check (1 Sam. xi. 1; 2 Sam. xii. 26). Those who had been warmest in their loyalty to Ishbosheth must have felt that David had more than cleared himself of all complicity in his assassination (2 Sam. iv. 11, 12). They had had the son of

* The name, in this instance, had a different origin (Gen. xxxii. 1), but its continuance implied that the city was a "double camp" in the usual signification of the word.

Jonathan among them, living for a time in the tent of a chief sheikh, and his loving reverence for David and David's kindness to him may have prepared the way for the reception which was now given to the king (2 Sam. ix. 5; xvii. 27). Lastly, Mahanaim was a city of the Levites (Josh. xxi. 38), and they, feeling how closely the interests of their order were bound up with the continuance of the worship which David had reorganized, and grateful for the lighter services and larger honours which they had received at his hands (1 Chron. xxiii. 25), were sure to be themselves inclined in his favour, might form no contemptible addition to his army, and were likely to influence others.

Proof enough was, at any rate, given as soon as David arrived at Mahanaim that he had fallen among friends. Never was there a fuller measure of the overflowing hospitality of the East. From the lower arable land came wheat, barley, and flour, the parched corn and parched pulse fresh gathered from the now ripening harvest. From the higher pastures and wood of the Haurân came "honey and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine," the food of a people still nomadic. The report had spread through the country that the fugitives were "hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness," and this was the immediate result. Among those who were foremost in these acts of kindness were "Shobi, the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim." Each of these names, little known as they may at first seem to us, has a history of its own, and leads, if we take the trouble to put together facts that we find scattered.

here and there, to a series of coincidences among the most interesting even of this interesting period.

(a) What was there to draw Shobi there? David was the conqueror of his people, and had treated them after the conquest with unusual harshness (2 Sam. xii. 31). Should we not have expected here, at any rate, enmity, or at least indifference? The facts which explain the seeming strangeness are, however, not far to seek. The same woman, Abigail, the mother of Amasa and sister of Zeruiah, is described in one passage (2 Sam. xvii. 25) as the daughter of Nahash, in another as the daughter of Jesse (2 Chron. iii. 16). Either then we must infer, (1) that Jesse bore the name of Nahash in addition to his own, which would only be probable on the assumption that there were some relations of kindred or hospitality uniting him with the king of Ammon, just as like relationships connected him with the allied dynasty of Moab (Ruth iv. 10; 1 Sam. xxii. 3)—an hypothesis which David's remembrance of the kindness shown to him by Nahash at some earlier period of his life (2 Sam. x. 2) renders probable enough—or else, (2) that by some chain of events unknown to us, adoption or intermarriage, the two houses of Jesse and Nahash had been linked together so closely that the same woman might be described as the daughter of each of them. In either case nothing is more probable than that David, deposing or putting to death the king, Hanun, who had so foully outraged his ambassadors, should leave one member of the family from whom he had once received kindness in some sort of dependent chieftainship, and that Shobi's ready help was the fruit at once of gratitude for the past, and calculation for the future. The

calculation was at all events not much at fault. When Solomon adopted the policy of alliance by marriage with neighbouring nations, Moab and Ammon are the most conspicuous after Egypt (1 Kings xi. 1). Rehoboam his successor was the son of an Ammonitess (1 Kings xiv. 31).

(b) Machir, again, had many points of contact with the house of David, and to these we may safely trace the course which he pursued at this crisis.

(1) He had, as we have seen, given shelter to the son of Jonathan, and the fact that they had both shown a father's kindness to the same helpless cripple could not fail to be a bond of union between them. Machir may well have heard from Mephibosheth the praises of David, David the praises of Machir. (2) Among the remoter ancestors of David we find the name of Hezron (Ruth iv. 8; 1 Chron. ii. 5), and this Hezron, after becoming by one marriage the father of Caleb and the illustrious house descended from him, became by another, with the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead (1 Chron. ii. 21), the father or grandfather of Ram, the name which stands next in order in the pedigree of David. Making every allowance for the confusion into which the genealogical tables of the first book of Chronicles have in some degree fallen, it may, at any rate, be fairly inferred that there had been an old family alliance between the two leading houses of Judah and Gilead respectively, which the sheikh, who now bore the old honoured name of Machir, would not be slow to recognise. (3) There may have been a yet closer tie. Machir, as we have seen, is mentioned as the son of Ammiel. But that name appears in 1 Chron. iii. 5, as the slightly altered

form of Eliam, the son of Ahithophel, and father of Bathsheba. It is possible, therefore, that the kindness which he showed to David may have been offered as to his sister's husband, though the equal possibility that there may have been two men of the same name makes it difficult to speak with greater certainty.

(c) A like doubt hangs about the identification of Barzillai. If the Gileadite chief of Rogelim were the same as Barzillai the Meholathite, the father of Adriel who had married Saul's eldest daughter (1 Sam. xviii. 17; 2 Sam. xxi. 8), we should see in this case, as in the preceding, an instance of transferred allegiance from the old to the new dynasty. The fact of his influence at or near Mahanaim would account for Ishbosheth's choice of it as a place of refuge. Here, also, David's nobleness towards the house of Saul may have exercised an attractive power. Apart from this, however,*

* I am indebted to a young friend and pupil (H. J. S. Cotton) for the following series of suggestive hints, tending to establish the identity. (1) Meholah is probably the same place as Abel-Meholah, just as Shittim and Abel-Shittim are identical. (2) Abel, "the moist meadow," implies nearness to a river; and Judges vii. 22-24, shows that that river must have been the Jordan. (3) Abel-Meholah appears in 1 Kings iv. 12, as the extreme eastern boundary of a district of the kingdom, probably, therefore, on the Jordan. (4) Elijah, on his way to Damascus (1 Kings xix. 19), calls Elisha of Abel-Meholah, keeping to the east side of the Jordan to avoid the persecution of Jezebel, just crossing it to call the new prophet as he ploughs his own land. (5) As Abel-Meholah was thus on the borders of the Gilead country, the same man might naturally be at once a Meholathite and a Gileadite. To these, yet another may perhaps be added. (6) The literal translation of Song of Songs vi. 13, would give as question and answer "What will ye see in the Shulamite? The dance (*meholah*) of Mahanaim." Abel-Meholah is therefore the "meadow of the dance," the scene probably of some festive ritual of the maidens of the city. But if so, then Rogelim, which signifies "the place of them that tread," may well have been identical with or near to the "meadow of the dance."

enough remains to make the old chief of fourscore years a living and real person. Richest and most powerful of the chiefs of Gilead, he could look back to a time when the monarchy of Israel was still new and untried, when the Tabernacle had ceased to be at Shiloh and had not yet been erected at Jerusalem. What he had seen of that monarchy in its relation to his own province, might well make him anxious to support it and its institutions. We know, at any rate, that the influence of the Levites of Mahanaim made itself felt, and that he allied himself by personal ties to the sons of Aaron. Long afterwards, as late as the return from Babylon, a family of priests were found who gloried in tracing their descent to a marriage with the Gileadite's daughter, and bore as their distinctive title the name of "the children of Barzillai" (Ezra ii. 61).

It may fairly be inferred that the army which gathered round David consisted largely of the clans that followed in the train of these three chieftains. Now, as at the commencement of his reign, we may think of the Gadites, "men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, who were swift as the roes upon the mountains" (1 Chron. xii. 8), and of Reuben and Manasseh joining them "with all manner of instruments for the battle" (1 Chron. xii. 37).

The army with which Absalom crossed the Jordan is described emphatically as the army of Israel; and where Israel is contrasted with Judah, we may be quite sure that Ephraim was foremost. The old tribal jealousy which had shown itself under Gideon (Judg. viii. 2) and Jephthah (Judg. xii. 1),


and which was to burst forth again under Jeroboam, was at work here, and for the time probably Benjamin (as in the case of Shimei, and Sheba, the son of Bichri, the leader of a later revolt, 2 Sam. xx. 1) followed in the wake of Ephraim. The approach of Absalom had the effect of reviving the old warlike energy of the king. That once lion-like heart glowed for a moment with its earlier fire. He will go forth with his people, fight at their head, and share their dangers. Reluctantly, however, he yields to the entreaties of his army, with something of the passivity of age, something perhaps of the self-distrust of one who has forfeited the right to think and act for himself. So he remains behind, "What seemeth you best I will do." He stands at the gate of Mahanaim as the army marches out to battle. One special command is given to the leader of each division, to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, with Absalom."

Of the battle which followed, we have no detailed account. The very locality is a matter of conjecture. Everything leads to the conclusion that it was fought in the Gilead country, not far from Mahanaim, and yet it is described as taking place in the wood of Ephraim, the whole territory of that tribe lying on the west side of the Jordan. Most probably the forest, hitherto without a name, became famous in consequence of this very battle, and was known afterwards as the wood of Ephraim,* just as in another instance, one of the hills of Ephraim was known as the mount of Amalekites (Judg. xii. 15), apparently as having witnessed a defeat of the

* Possibly, however, it may have had the name, as the scene of an earlier battle (Judg. xii. 4, 5).

nomadic horde by the heroes of that tribe (Judg. v. 14). The issue of the contest was not long doubtful. Better disciplined, and under more experienced generals, the forces of David broke the ranks of the army of Israel. A hasty flight entangled them in the dense labyrinth of the forest. Absalom, riding on his mule at full speed, was caught by the thick forked boughs of a terebinth, and jammed in with the violence of the shock so as to be unable to extricate himself.* How long he hung there we know not. There was time for some wandering soldier to catch sight of him and to carry the news to Joab, time for the parly in which the son of Zeruiah sought in vain to tempt his informant to become the tool of his murderous purpose, time for him, when that scheme was baffled by the man's stubborn loyalty, for Joab to make his way to the tree, and still Absalom was alive. The hour was however come. With his own hand, as brooking no delay, Joab thrust three darts into the heart of the defenceless prince. His ten followers rushed upon the dying man and finished the work with their swords. The maimed and bleeding carcase, once so glorious in its beauty, without a blemish "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot," was thrust into a large pit. They buried him there, not as a king's son was buried, but "with the burial of an ass." Not the "pillar in the king's dale," but the *cairn* which men piled over the grave of the accursed (as in the case of Achan, Joshua vii. 25), was the monument of David's best-loved son. So

* There is, it need hardly be said, no support in the Scripture narrative for the common belief that he was caught and suspended by his hair.



perished the hope of the rebel army. The burnt crops of Joab were avenged.

It remained to convey the news of what had happened to the king, and from this Joab manifestly shrunk. The young priest Ahimaaz, knowing only of the victory, wished to act now, as before, as the special courier in the king's service; but Joab dared not entrust him with the fatal secret, told him vaguely only that the king's son was dead, and sent another messenger, Cush, probably—so the name seems to indicate—an Ethiopian slave,* who knowing less, and caring less for David's feelings, would not shrink and hesitate, as Ahimaaz would, from bringing out the fatal truth. The son of Zadok, however, eager and impetuous, will not be restrained. He must, at any rate, go after Cush. Knowing the country better, or more practised in a courier's work, he is the first to reach the gate of Mahanaim. There, "between the two gates," in the space, *i.e.*, of the thickness of the walls, sat the old king, in anxious expectation, the watchman standing on the tower above, and shouting, as he saw any one approach, to the king below. First one form, then another, is seen speeding over the plain. The king seizes on each fact, as it is reported, and catches at an interpretation. If it is one man only, it shows that it is a messenger with news, not the return of straggling fugitives. If it is Ahimaaz, the news cannot but be good. He hears the familiar joyful salutation, "Peace be to thee;" he is told of the victory which that salutation implied. But this is not what his thoughts, perhaps his prayers, have

* In the Hebrew the name has the article prefixed, "the Cush," *sc.* the Cushite, or Ethiopian.

been dwelling on. Is there peace to the young man Absalom? * Ahimaaz, as Joab had foreseen, shrinks from the fatal word. He gives an evasive answer, "I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was." The Ethiopian slave then comes, tell the same news, hears the same question; and with no touch of reverence for the father's sorrow, nakedly blurts out, as if he were the bearer of good news, that which filled up the measure of David's woe, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is."

Of all the hours of agony in David's life—of all hours of merely human agony in the history of the Bible, that was, beyond all doubt, the darkest. First, in the loud bitter cry, as he rushed from the awe-struck crowd of soldiers and messengers and townsmen of Mahanaim, then from that chamber of sorrow over the gateway, in the long protracted wailing of a broken heart, did that agony find vent—"O my son Absalom; my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee; O, Absalom, my son, my son!" Terrible was it to think that this was the end of that bright morning of beauty and joy in which his heart had exulted; more terrible still to feel that his own sins had wrought out that fearful retribution. Had his own life been purer, that son might have been free from the guilt of incest; had he done his duty as a father and a king, punishing at the right time, forgiving at the right time, all might have yet been well. And now all was over. The doom of that great woe was irre-

* It is difficult to render in English the special force which the meaning of the name gives to the Hebrew question, "*Shalom lana'ar le Absalom*"—"Is there peace to the youth, the 'father of peace'?"

parable. Of him also it was true, within the limits of man's vision, that "he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

And yet not the less we may believe that, in that hour of shattered hopes, and agony beyond words, when there seemed to have fallen on him the horror of great darkness, the life of David, all unconscious as he was of it, was passing through the refiner's fire, and becoming purer and brighter than it had ever been in the days of his most glowing victories, or the moments of his most ecstatic adoration. The darkest of all human sorrows brings him into contact with that which is superhuman. Here, also, in the truest and deepest sense, the life of David is a type of a higher life, his agony a fore-shadowing of the agony of Gethsemane. That passionate cry, "Would God I had died for thee,—died in thy stead, delivering, redeeming thee;" that wonderful union of a father's righteous hatred of the evil, with a yearning, ever-deepening love for the poor wayward doer of the evil, were leading him through that living experience by which, and perhaps by which alone, the mystery of Atonement ceases to be a dogma of the schools, and becomes the most precious of all realities. So it had been before with Moses, when he cried in his intercession, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii. 32). So it was afterwards with Paul, when he wrote in his great heaviness, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3). That craving of man's spirit when it is most after the likeness of Christ, to sacrifice its own peace, life, blessedness for the sake of others,

helps us to understand, vain and fruitless as it may often seem to be (he who makes the sacrifice himself needing pardon), the perfect sacrifice of the Sinless One. "With men this is impossible, but not with God." What kings and prophets desired to do and could not, that the Son of God did, taking away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

David's lamentation on the death of Absalom, no less than the command so solemnly given as the armies went forth to battle, speaks however of more than sorrow. It bears witness of a day of earnest, passionate intercession. Dare we say that that intercession was unavailing? Was there in those last hours of struggling life a vision of the darkness of the abyss, self-loathing, self-condemnation, the remembrance of earlier days, the return of a child's desire for pardon, the cry, "I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee?" We know not. No voice came out of the dread depths of silence to reveal his fate to David, or to us. It seemed as though all hope was gone. With him as with the thousands in every age who depart and make no sign, the answer to the question, Is there any hope? lies behind the veil, and that veil no man may withdraw.*

* The Jewish Rabbis of a later time, in their strange legendary way, showed some sympathy with the yearnings of the father's heart. For each time that the words "My son" came from the lips of David, one of the seven gates of Gehenna (so they fabled) rolled back, and with the last the spirit of Absalom passed into the peace of Paradise. (Bartolucci, "Biblioth. Rabbinnica," ii. pp. 128—162.) Augustine, on the contrary, here, as too often elsewhere, placing himself on the judgment-seat of God, passes sentence of condemnation, chiefly, it might almost seem, because he saw in Absalom's guilt a parallel to the rebellion of the Donatists against the Catholic Church, and read their doom in his doom (*Contra Gaudentium Donatist.* i. 12).

v.

We have followed this tragedy to its close. To enter with any fulness into the events that came after it would lead us into the opening of another stage of history. Fresh intrigues and plots, fresh actors in them, fresh outbursts of tribal jealousies would once again pass before us. It will be enough to trace briefly the immediate sequel of those who had been actors in this.

The woe of David spread like a contagion over his people. The victory was turned to mourning. Instead of songs and dances and triumphal processions, as was wont (1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7), the "people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed flee away in the day of battle." It was no easy task for Joab by taunts, reproaches, menaces to rouse David from his prostrate sorrow, as he lay stretched on the ground, his face covered with his mantle. At last, however—how pale and worn and stricken we may well imagine—he appeared once again and "sat in the gate." The courage of his followers revived. The scattered and bewildered partisans of Absalom could look nowhere but to him. His return to Jerusalem was a thing of course. But the king was unwilling to return till the men of his own tribe, whose treachery he had felt most painfully, had given some proof of their returning loyalty. A message was sent through Zadok and Abiathar to tell the elders of Judah of his readiness to forgive. The offer of pardon and preferment to Amasa withdrew from the rebellion the only general capable of maintaining it.

The invitation so anxiously expected came, "Return thou and all thy servants."

The homeward journey began. The representatives of Judah waited at Gilgal to receive them. The king and his followers made their way from Mahanaim to the ford of Jordan. Before they began their passage across it, they were met by the two men who had had most to reproach themselves with on the day of his flight, and who now sought, by an affected eagerness, and yet more by a display of their strength, to conciliate his favour. Shimei was there at the head of a thousand men, as one whose support was worth having. Ziba was there with his fifteen sons and twenty slaves, appearing in his new character as possessor of the estates of Saul. Shimei's offence was open, and he came with abject apologies. Abishai, eager for blood as if Shimei's curses were still ringing in his ears, again presses for vengeance, and again hears the old answer, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?" David has learnt for the time, at least, to forgive. No man shall that day be put to death in Israel. Ziba had no forgiveness as yet to ask. His object seems to have been rather to pre-occupy the king's mind against the chances of detection. He was only just in time. Mephibosheth, as he probably knew beforehand, was on his way. Haggard, squalid, sorrow-worn as he had been since the day of David's flight, so he appeared now, witnessing even before he spoke against the slander that had alienated David's heart from him. He does not ask for restitution or revenge. True to his noble, saintly nature, all that he desires is to love and be loved again. "My lord the king is as an

angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes." The king's answer is not such as we would gladly have heard from him, but neither was it so iniquitous as it has sometimes been supposed to be. If on the one hand there is some tone of impatience and perplexity, as of one who knew not which to believe, and shrank from going into the question thoroughly, "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?" if the sentence, "I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land," seems like the rough and ready solution of that perplexity, it must be remembered on the other, that Mephibosheth received again all that he most cared for, the king's favour, his old place at the king's table, and the formal recognition of his ownership, while Ziba fell back nearly (probably even quite) to his old position, looking after the culture of the lands, and paying as rental half the produce to his master. This was penalty enough. Beyond this David's recollection of the services that had been rendered him would not let him go. And with this Mephibosheth was content. "Yea, let him take all." The king's return in safety was enough for him.

We rest with more satisfaction on the parting scene with the brave old Gileadite of Rogelim. He, too, is at the ford of Jordan, and crosses over with the king. But then he turns back to his home. In vain David offers him a place in his court, a seat at his table. He is too old to change his free life in the wilderness for the closer air of a city and a palace. What for him are the dainties of a royal table, the singing-men of the king's services in the Tabernacle, the singing-women of his feasts? He has heard of these things, and does not care to have

them. He leaves it to his son Chimham to go and taste the new life, to witness the wonderful magnificence of Solomon (1 Kings ii. 7), to become afterwards as famous as his father for the Eastern virtue of hospitality, the founder of a caravanserai for pilgrims, on the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, which continued to bear his name, even down to the very close of the monarchy (Jer. xli. 17). So the king and the old chief parted with mutual tokens of respect. The passage over the Jordan was completed. The tribe of Judah received back their king at Gilgal.

Here, for us, the history ends. It has taught its own lessons. As an actual record of the past it has its own interest. But here, as in so many other instances, if we are to measure rightly the magnitude of that interest, we must ask ourselves what would have been the probable consequences if it had ended otherwise than it did? Only by picturing to ourselves what might have been the state of Europe had Charles Martel failed to stem the northward progress of the Saracenic hosts; what might have been the condition of England had there been no storm or tempest to scatter the ships of Philip of Spain, can we take a true estimate of all that was involved in the issue of the battle of Tours, in the fate of the Invincible Armada. And here, too, the question, what would have been the history of Israel if the revolt of Absalom had been successful? forces itself upon us, and (difficult as it is to construct any history on an hypothesis) demands an answer. (1) First, then, there would have been all the difference between a reign like that of Solomon, opening, at least, with the love of truth, wisdom,

right; a time of culture, commerce, and intellectual progress, and one beginning with violence, and licence, and parricidal war. The wisdom of Solomon, the glory of Solomon, all the thoughts that grew out of that wisdom and glory would have been unknown to us. (2) The position of the priesthood must have become in every way a false one. Either Zadok and Abiathar, and their houses, must have continued to play out in sad reality the part which they had begun in subtle policy, and so the whole order would have been degraded into the mere tools of a despotic licence; or else, if true to their allegiance, they must have risen in rebellion, taking with them the sacred Ark, and so, once again, leaving a deserted sanctuary, compelling Absalom to do as afterwards Jeroboam did, and to fill up their places with "the lowest of the people." In either case, the religious framework of the whole polity would have been shaken. The priesthood would have become, more rapidly than it did, contemptible and base. The rebellion, from its very commencement an anti-sacerdotal movement, would have brought back the lawlessness of the time of the Judges. (3) More fatal still would have been the influence of Absalom's success upon the order of the prophets. They, at any rate, must have remained faithful to the king whom the great founder of their school had solemnly anointed, who found in Nathan and Gad his chosen advisers, submitting at their hands even to rebuke and shame. They would not have paid their homage to one who had broken the great laws of God. A wide schism between the monarchy and the prophetic order at that early period, would have been fatal to both. The schools

of the prophets suppressed, their disciples scattered, the training in minstrelsy and song ceasing for lack of teachers; this, or hardly less than this, would have followed from that antagonism. In that case, we might have known little or nothing of the history of Israel. A few fragments of the wondrous story and ancient laws that gathered round the name of Moses, a few songs bearing the name of David, might have escaped the wear and tear of time, but we should have had an Old Testament (if an Old Testament had in that case been possible) without the Prophets, without the Books of Solomon, without a History of the Monarchy of Judah.

THE EARTHQUAKE IN THE DAYS OF UZZIAH, KING OF JUDAH.

PALESTINE, it is well known, lies almost in the centre of one great volcanic region of the earth's surface, that, namely, which includes the basin of the Mediterranean and the provinces of Western or Central Asia. Traces of that volcanic action are found in every direction. The black basaltic rock of the Haurân, the hot springs of Tiberias and Emmaus and Gadara, the naphtha fountains near the Dead Sea, the dykes of porphyry and other volcanic rocks that force their way through the limestone, the many caves in the limestone rock themselves,—all these show that we are treading on ground where the forces of the hidden fires of earth have been in times past in active operation. We are, that is, in a zone of earthquakes.*

Of some of these earthquakes, tremendous in their phænomena and the extent of the desolation caused by them, we have full details, in earlier and even in

* Compare Ritter's "Geography of Palestine," vol. ii. pp. 242—244 (English translation); Dr. Pusey's note on Amos iv. 11; and Tristram's "Land of Israel," pp. 457, 584.

contemporary history. The Jewish writer, Josephus, speaks of one which occurred B.C. 31 as having destroyed many villages, and countless flocks and herds, and human lives, which he estimates (with somewhat, perhaps, of Oriental vagueness as to statistics) now at ten, and now at thirty thousand.* Herod and his army, who were then carrying on war against the Arabs, were only saved by their being encamped in tents, and so free from the perils of falling houses. As it was, he had to combat the panic and depression which it spread through his troops, and, with something of a sceptical epicureanism, to assure them that these natural phenomena were not signs of greater evils yet to come, but were calamities by themselves, having no connection with any others that followed or preceded them. Within the last thirty years again the shocks of an earthquake were felt over the whole of Syria, in Beirout, Damascus, Cyprus; Safed was almost utterly destroyed; Tiberias was left little better than a heap of ruins, and one-third of the population perished, to the number of a thousand. Rivers forsook their beds and left them dry for hours. The hot springs that flow into the Sea of Tiberias were largely swollen in volume, and the level of the lake raised.†

One such convulsion has left its impress on the history of the kingdom of Judah. The first verse of the prophecy of Amos (perhaps from his own pen, perhaps prefixed by some early compiler) tells us of the "words which he saw concerning Israel, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of

* Ant., xv. 5, § 2; Bell. Jud., i. 19, § 3.
† Ritter, ii. p. 348.

Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, *two years before the earthquake.*”* The calamity had become a chronological era by which men reckoned, and the proof which this gives of the impression it had made speaks volumes for its destructive character. Neither in the Books of Kings, nor in those of Chronicles, it is true, do we find any records of it. They dwell on the personal calamity which smote the king with leprosy, and pass over in silence what must have been at the time far more terrible. In the lost chronicles of the kings of Judah, from which our extant histories were compiled, we should have doubtless found it registered in the annals of Uzziah’s reign. Josephus,† who seems to have followed some local traditions independent of the Biblical narrative, connects the two events together. The earthquake, he says, happened as the king entered the sanctuary to burn incense, and the holy place was thrown open by it, and a bright light like the sun flashed upon him, and so he became a leper. This is probably erroneous as to its chronology, but another fact which the historian names shows in a vivid manner the extent of the convulsion. A large mass of rock, he says, rolled down from the mountain on the west of the city (perhaps from the western side of the Mount of Olives) and was carried for four stadia (half a mile) till it reached the eastern slope, and there stopped up the pathway which led to the king’s gardens. Two centuries later it still dwelt in men’s minds as the type of all such calamities. Zechariah in painting the terrors of “the day of the Lord,” which he sees in the uncertain distance of the future, describes them by imagery clearly borrowed from

* Amos i. 1.

† Ant., ix. 10, § 4.

this catastrophe. The Mount of Olives is to cleave "towards the east and towards the west;" "There shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove towards the north, and half of it towards the south."* All that had been witnessed in the old convulsion was to be repeated on a greater and more tremendous scale. And then follow words which show what terror had been produced by that convulsion,—“Ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains. . . . Yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.” The population of Jerusalem, *i.e.*, had been driven in their terror from the walls and houses that were falling on them, from the masses of rock which were thus hurled upon the city, and had sought refuge in the open country.†

And it was, so far as we know, the first great earthquake in the history of Israel. There is no trace of anything of the kind in the period of the Judges, or the earlier history of the Kings. The earthquake which rent the rocks when Elijah stood on Horeb, that which had been felt at Sinai or in Edom, when the “earth trembled and the heavens dropped” (Judg. v. 4), (if indeed we are dealing here with natural phenomena at all), affected only that locality, and were not felt in Judah. It is obvious that this must have added greatly to its terribleness,

* Zech. xiv. 4, 5.

† As Ewald interprets the passage, the prophet represents the people as fleeing, in their panic, *from* the valley of Jehoshaphat and the slopes of the Mount of Olives, and finding refuge in the courts of the Temple and the presence of Jehovah there. On either view we have the picture of a great convulsion. It is singular that there is no reference to this fact, and its probable connection with the present form of the mountain, in Mr. Grove's admirable, and otherwise exhaustive, article on the “Mount of Olives,” in Dr. Smith's “Dictionary of the Bible.”

and to the awe which men felt in thinking of it. To a people like the Israelites it would seem to be the immediate action of the will of Jehovah, punishing them for their evil, the forerunner of other judgments like it in kind and, it might be, greater in degree. Physical explanations of the phenomena, such as the Greek intellect, with its thirst for knowledge, hunted after, would not be in their thoughts at all. They had not as yet learnt to look on such disasters with Herod's epicureanism. They had no myths like those of Vulcan and the Titans and the Cyclops, to take off the edge of their dismay. It burst upon them as the eruption of Vesuvius and the destruction of Pompeii burst upon the Italians in A.D. 79; as the earthquake of Lisbon burst upon the startled ears of Europe in A.D. 1755; and it found them in the state in which men are most susceptible to the "terrors of the Lord," as seen in the more sudden, convulsive changes of the world around them. Doubtless we may admit as part of the connection of interdependence, which makes the natural and moral government of the world a great and harmonious whole, that the impressions thus made are meant to inspire men with the awe which may ripen into reverence, with the sense that they live in the midst of unknown, incalculable forces which may burst out upon them at uncertain intervals, with the feeling that these too are neither exempt from the control of law nor exceptions to the sovereignty of a righteous and loving Will. So received, they form part of the education which man receives from nature. We misread the lesson when we think that those on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all the Galileans, when we infer that the earth-

quake and the lightning come as proofs and punishments of special guilt. We misread it not less fatally when we assume that the physical laws which they obey can subserve no moral purpose, that earthquakes, and pestilence, and famine have no part as warnings, chastisements, tests, in the discipline of nations.

I return to my main purpose in this paper, that of noting the traces which this earthquake in the reign of Uzziah made upon the minds of contemporary writers. And beyond all question the greatest of those writers was the prophet whose vision of the unseen began in the year that King Uzziah died. In the words of Isaiah the son of Amoz, if anywhere, we might expect to find recollections of what had been so terrible at the time, and had received a new significance so shortly afterwards.

1. I start with the prophet's solemn proclamation in ch. ii. 10—22, of the day of the Lord that he saw in all its apocalyptic terrors. The words are, it is true, in part general enough. The day of the Lord is to be upon "all the cedars of Lebanon and all the oaks of Bashan, upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pictures of desire." But if we read the words that follow in the light of the history, we shall see, if I mistake not, thoughts which grew out of the ineffaceable impressions of that day of terror which the prophet had himself witnessed:—

"And they shall go into the holes of the rocks
And into the caves of the earth,
For fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty,
When He ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

And the picture is repeated, as if to deepen the awe and terror which it suggested:—

"In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver,
 And his idols of gold,
 Which they made each man for himself to worship,
 To the moles and to the bats;
 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
 And into the tops of the ragged rocks,
 For fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty,
 When He ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

We see, as it were, on a larger scale and in a more awful form what the prophet had himself witnessed, what Zechariah has, by a seeming accident, preserved the record of,—the people of Jerusalem fleeing from the city, with its tottering walls and falling houses, and seeking refuge in the neighbouring hills, in rocks and caverns which seemed so strongly fixed on their foundations that not even the earthquake could bring them down.

2. Another reminiscence of it, not less distinct, meets us, I believe, in ch. xxiv. 18—20 :—

"The windows from on high are open,
 And the foundations of the earth do shake,
 The earth is utterly broken down,
 The earth is clean dissolved,
 The earth is moved exceedingly.
 The earth shall reel too and fro like a drunkard,
 And shall be removed like a cottage,
 And the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it,
 And it shall fall, and shall not rise again."

The prophet appeals here also to no vague unknown terrors, but to the memory of what had actually been experienced.

3. The earthquake is noticed, as we have seen in the opening words, the title-page, in fact, of the prophecy of Amos. It is clearly mentioned there as pointing to the facts that the prediction with which the chapter opens had been fulfilled by it, that it was uttered before, not after the event :—

"The Lord will roar from Zion,
 And utter his voice from Jerusalem,

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And the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn,
And the top of Carmel shall wither."

In a later chapter, we may find, if I mistake not, traces of the devastation which it caused, as extending beyond the limits of Jerusalem, and, like other more recent convulsions, spreading over the whole of Palestine. Recounting the chastisements which had already come, and, as it would seem, come fruitlessly upon the people, the prophet goes through various forms of suffering :—

"I have withholden the rain from you
When there were yet three months to the harvest. . . .
I have smitten you with blasting and mildew. . . .
I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of
Egypt."

And then he passes on to the last and greatest terror :—

"*I have overthrown some of you,*
As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord."

The words clearly point, not to the capture of a city by an invading army, nor to any casual conflagration, but to some catastrophe like in kind to that which had overthrown the Cities of the Plain—to some shaking of the earth, accompanied, as such convulsions often are, by an outburst of the subterranean fires. We know that such a convulsion did take place in the prophet's time, at Jerusalem. A shock, which made the people of the city flee to the hills, and dislodged a large mass of rock from the Mount of Olives, may well have laid some of the towns and villages of Samaria in the dust.

4. But if the words, "The Lord will roar from Zion," as we find them in Amos, are connected, as they manifestly are, with the earthquake of King

Uzziah, we cannot refuse to recognise a like connection, whether it be that of prediction or fulfilment, in the corresponding words of Joel iii. 14:—

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of judgment,
The day of the Lord is near in the valley of judgment,
The sun and the moon shall be darkened,
And the stars shall withdraw their shining.
*The Lord also shall roar out of Zion,
And utter his voice from Jerusalem,
And the heavens and the earth shall shake.*"

The date of Joel's prophetic work is among the unsettled questions of biblical criticism. But there is at least a strong preponderance of authority for the opinion which makes him a contemporary of Hosea and of Amos, and places the date of his written prophecy in the reign of Uzziah. And if so, then here, too, we may find a picture drawn from the terrors of that memorable day. What the prophet had actually seen,—the terror-stricken multitudes rushing, in ghastly panic, into the valley of Jehoshaphat (the valley that lay between the city and the Mount of Olives, and through which the Kidron flowed); the strange, bewildering darkness by which earthquakes are commonly accompanied;* the mutterings and crashes in the depths of the earth; the shaking of the mountains,—this became the type and parable of a yet more dreadful day, of another valley of judgment.†

5. The language of later prophets is, of course, open to the criticism that it takes up the imagery which earlier writers had introduced, without the same distinct reference to historical facts that we find in them. If, however, the remembrance of Uzziah's

* Comp. Lyell's "Principles of Geology," c. xxix.

† Jehoshaphat means, I need scarcely say, "Jehovah shall judge."

earthquake lingered on in men's minds as late as the time of Zechariah, we need not hesitate to recognise it also in the language of Ezekiel. He, too, has a vision of judgment upon the heathen, like that of Joel. He sees the Scythian invaders (Gog, Magog, Meshech, Tubal) gathered against the city, threatening to lay it waste as Sennacherib had done, and proclaims in the name of Jehovah (chap. xxxviii. 19, 20):—

"In my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken,
Surely in that day *there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel,*
So that the fishes of the seas and the fowls of the heavens,
And the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth,
And all the men that are upon the face of the earth,
Shall shake at my presence,
And the mountains shall be thrown down,
And the steep places shall fall,
And every wall shall fall to the ground."

6. Lastly, as the closing vision of the Apocalypse gathers up and reproduces other images of terror and of glory from the writings of the older prophets, so also does it reproduce this. But here too the references may have been not only the use of a familiar imagery, but sharpened and deepened by the events of recent history. One great earthquake, as we have seen, had been felt in Palestine and Syria in B.C. 31. Another overthrew twelve cities in Asia Minor in A.D. 17. The whole period was indeed one of no ordinary volcanic activity throughout the Roman Empire. There were "earthquakes" as well as "famines and pestilences" in "divers places."* And so in the pictures which the Revelation of St. John brings before us we may see, I believe, at once the last vibration, as it were, of the earthquake of King

* Matt. xxiv. 7

Uzziah, and the impression produced by these more recent convulsions of the same nature. When he speaks of the "great earthquake,* in which the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand;" when he pictures the affrighted "remnant" who "gave glory to the God of heaven;" † confessed, *i.e.*, as in his sight, their deeds of evil; ‡ he is painting what he may himself have witnessed or heard of in the cities of Syria or Asia. In the picture which he draws ‡ of the "great earthquake" at the opening of the sixth seal, when "every mountain and island were removed out of their places," and the "kings and great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us," we have the same scene, on a scale of greater magnitude and more appalling terror, as that which had been drawn in the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz.

* Rev. xi. 13.

† This is clearly the meaning of the phrase here, as it is in Josh. vii. 19; John ix. 24.

‡ Chap. vi. 12.

VIII.

THE PSALMS OF THE SONS OF KORAH.

THE student who reads the psalms in the Bible version has one help in understanding them which is wanting to one who knows them only in the Prayer-Book of the Church of England. He sees at a glance that they are far from being exclusively, or even chiefly, the Psalms of David—that many are ascribed to other authors—that many appear without any name at all.* The book, when it took its present form, brought together the “Hymns Ancient and Modern” which the Jewish Church inherited from her many psalmists,—in many cases the special tunes, some of foreign, some apparently of secular origin, to which they were originally sung. We have in it the anthology of a devotional literature spreading through some centuries, and connected with widely varied stages in the history of the people.

Among the psalms which are neither assigned to David nor left anonymous, we find a group of eleven

* The following table shows the proportion under each name:—

David	73
Moses	1
Solomon	2
Asaph	12
Sons of Korah	12
Ethan	1
Anonymous	49

which bear the name of the Sons of Korah.* I wish to call attention to these as presenting, I believe, many features of interest which are commonly passed over almost, or altogether, unnoticed. The conclusion to which I have been led, and which I now submit to the judgment of my readers, is that they belong, one and all of them, to the reign of Hezekiah. If I mistake not, the study of the evidence, for the most part internal and circumstantial, which seems to me to establish that conclusion, will throw light both upon the history of that reign and upon the Psalms in question.

I start with calling attention to another fact of which also it may be questioned whether it is as well known and considered as it ought to be. As the psalms were not written by one man, so neither do they form one book. The Psalter is, in fact, a Pentateuch, and the lines of demarcation which divide the five books one from another are clear and distinct enough. At the end of the 41st Psalm, of the 72nd, of the 89th, and of the 106th, we meet with the solemn Amen, single or redoubled, following on a doxology, which indicates that one book ends and that another is about to begin. A closer study of the psalms shows that each book possesses characteristics of its own. Jehovah (*"the Lord"*), for example, is prominent as the Divine name in the first book, Elohim (*"God"*) in the second. Of these, except so far as they connect themselves with my present subject, I cannot now speak. What I wish to dwell on is the fact that eight out of the

* The 43rd Psalm, which, though anonymous, is manifestly by the same writer as the 42nd, completes the twelve of the preceding note.

eleven Psalms of the Sons of Korah are found in the second of the five books, and the others in the third, and that both the books are referred, by most recent writers of repute,* to the reign of Hezekiah as the time, if not of the composition, at least of the compilation of the psalms which they contain. That reign was, it is clear, characterised by the desire to bring together and preserve the scattered treasures of the past, to restore and give fresh life to the long-neglected, it may be, silenced, services of the Temple choirs. As there were "proverbs of Solomon," which were left to oral tradition till the "men of Hezekiah king of Judah, copied them out" (Prov. xxv. 1); so, as part of the same task we may believe them to have arranged and transcribed many psalms of an earlier date. But the time was also one of high poetical activity, and of the musical culture which was then all but inseparable from it. In the full and vivid picture of the ritual that Hezekiah restored, with even more than its old magnificence, special stress is laid (2 Chron. xxix. 25—30) on the fact that he set "the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for *so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.*" "Hezekiah, the king, and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord *with the words of David* and of Asaph the seer." The words which I have printed in italics have a special significance. The king's activity in this revival of psalmody is ascribed to the impulse and guidance given by the prophets. A moment's thought on the history of his

* See Mr. Perowne's "Commentary," Introduction, p. lxxvii.

reign will remind us what prophet was most conspicuous as the king's friend and adviser. What Gad and Nathan had been to David, that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was to Hezekiah; and as the former, over and above their direct prophetic action, had superintended the hymnody and music of the Tabernacle, when it was first set upon the holy hill of Zion, so it was natural that the latter should direct those of the Temple, when it was re-opened and purified, after its desecration by Ahaz. And if so, then it would be equally natural, according to the analogy of the poetry of other countries, that a man of such surpassing genius should at least leave his impress upon the literature of his time. It would not be strange that we should find echoes of the language of Isaiah in the psalms which belong to the reign of Hezekiah. If he were himself a priest or Levite, as the narrative of his calling in the Temple and the part he took in the restoration of worship render probable enough, he may have been brought into close personal contact with the sons of Korah.

The minstrels so described appear from Num. xxvi. 58, 1 Chron. vi. 7, to have been Levites of the family of Kohath. To that family belonged Samuel, the founder of the School of the Prophets, and through them the father of the music and psalmody of Israel (1 Chron. vi. 28). Heman, whose name appears as connected with Ps. lxxxviii,* the grand-

* There is, however, some doubt whether "Heman the Ezrahite," of Psalm lxxxviii. and 1 Kings iv. 31, who there appears as connected with the tribe of Judah, is identical with the Levite grandson of Samuel. Some writers have supposed that he and his children were adopted into the tribe of Levi on account of their skill in minstrelsy; others, that the seeming discrepancy might be explained by the marriage of a Levite with an heiress of the tribe of Judah, in which case his name would appear in the genealogy of the latter tribe.

son of Shemuel, or Samuel, was at the time of David one of the most illustrious members of the choir (1 Chron. vi. 53). They were "set over the service of song in the house of the Lord," and were also "keepers of the gates of the tabernacle" (1 Chron. ix. 19). Like most of the Levites, they were warriors in the camp as well as ministers in the sanctuary, and are named among those who came to David in Ziklag, "armed with bows," and able to "use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones" (1 Chron. xii. 2, 6). Heman appears again with Asaph and Ethan, as one of the chief minstrels under David, as the "king's seer," "prophesying" "in the words of God." He had fourteen sons and three daughters, and all these, daughters as well as sons, "were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord" (1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6), the "teacher and the scholar" doing their respective tasks. It is clear then, whether we take the word "son" as implying lineal descent, or the succession of a school or guild, that the house of Korah, in spite of the rebellion and destruction of the leader from whom it took its name, was, through the whole history of the monarchy, conspicuous for its musical skill, transmitted as an inherited treasure from one generation to another. Two of that house of the sons of Heman were foremost among the Levites who helped Hezekiah in his work of reformation (2 Chron. xxix. 14). The circumstances of the time gave them a new prominence. They had to pass beyond the usual work of singing and playing with cymbals, and to become teachers. If they acted under the guidance of the great prophet of the time, if they inherited by family as well as tribal descent

what the schools of the prophets had received from Samuel, we might expect to find traces of the influence of both.

I may premise, further, that there is in this instance a manifest truthfulness in the superscription. We cannot always be sure, where psalms are ascribed to David, that the compiler of the book was not in some degree influenced by the desire to connect what he had before him with that illustrious name, and there are very few critical students of the Old Testament who would maintain the accuracy of all such conjectures or traditions. But with the sons of Korah it was otherwise. There was no individual to be glorified; no reason for putting their name rather than that of any other. If, too, the final editing of the Book of Psalms was, as was probable in itself, and as the Jewish tradition reports, the work of a priest or Levite, we are, I believe, as free from the chance of error as the nature of the case admits of, in ascribing the superscriptions of these Psalms to an authentic tradition.

I proceed now to the work of examining each, and showing how entirely the hypothesis which I have advanced fits in with whatever is most characteristic in them.

1. Ps. XLII. and XLIII.—I join these two psalms because the latter, though it has no superscription of any kind, is manifestly only a sequel to the former, breathing the same prayer, ending with the same burden. Both are the cry of one who has been a devout worshipper, and is now cut off from access to the "house of God." He "thirsts for the living God, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks." But he has not been in exile long. He remembers

the time when he "went with the multitude to the house of God." And he does not expect that difficulty of access to continue for more than a short time. He is confident that he shall yet "praise Him who is the help of his countenance." Incidentally, as it were, he indicates the locality of his exile. He is in the upland country of the Haurân, in "the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites."

So far the psalm might come from any Israelite kept away from the services of the tabernacle, and accordingly it has been referred by some to the time of David's flight from Absalom; by others, to the exiles by the waters of Babylon, or even to those who fled from Jerusalem in the time of the Maccabees. I venture to think that there are some touches which indicate another authorship. It is characteristic of David's psalms, that the name Jehovah is throughout prominent in them. Here the name Elohim is used throughout. David's sufferings were brought upon him by individual traitors, by a rebellious son. Those of the writer of this psalm are caused by an "ungodly nation." He is one whose prayer points to "the light and the truth," of which the Urim and the Thummim, the special glory of the tribe of Levi (Deut. xxxiii. 8), were the sacramental symbols. When he thinks of returning to the holy hill, it is as one who will "go to the altar" and praise God "with the harp."

The reign of Hezekiah presents precisely the circumstances which are thus implied. During the three years' siege of Samaria by the Assyrians, yet more when the armies of Sennacherib were encamped around Jerusalem, the worship of the Temple must have been thrown into disorder. Israelites, whether

laymen or Levites, who lived on the east of the Jordan, would find it impossible to go up to Jerusalem to keep the feasts there. They would feel this all the more acutely because but a little while before they had shared in all the jubilant thanksgiving of Hezekiah's great festival (2 Chron. xxx.). The words of scorn which the psalmist reports as said to him "daily," "Where is now thy God?" are identical in spirit, almost in terms, with the taunts with which the servants of the King of Assyria spake against the Lord (2 Chron. xxxii. 16). The confidence which finally overcomes depression and despondency is just what we should look for in one who had at any time come within the range of Isaiah's teaching.

2. Ps. XLIV.—The invasion of Sennacherib furnishes again a perfectly adequate explanation of all that is most characteristic of this dirge of lamentation. It has, of course, much that is common to all times of calamity and captivity; but the confidence that deliverance is near at hand, the thanksgiving because it has come, would hardly seem appropriate in the Babylonian exile. The conquests of the Assyrian king, on the other hand, had brought about the evils of which the psalm speaks. First the three tribes on the east of the Jordan, then the seven on the west, had been carried into exile. They were "scattered among the heathen." They had become "a by-word among the heathen." Railers like Rabshakeh, mocked them with their misfortunes; yet they were able to say—and this was more true of devout Levites in the time of Hezekiah than of any earlier time—that they "had not forgotten the name of their God, or holden up their hands to any

strange god." The cry, "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?" the appeal to what had been done in times of old, finds an exact echo in the words of Isaiah (li. 9):—

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord;
Awake, as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old."

3. Ps. XLV.—It may seem at first as if the joyous, festive character of this psalm were not in harmony with the "day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy," to which the previous three belong. The long-standing Jewish tradition, accepted by many Christian commentators, that it referred historically to the marriage of Solomon's and Pharaoh's daughter may seem to stop the way against any new hypothesis.* I believe, however, it will be found that of all the psalms which bear the name of the sons of Korah, this is one of which the facts of the reign of Hezekiah offer the most satisfactory explanation. They bring out its glowing hopes into daylight clearness. It finds in them on every side echoes, coincidences, illustrations.

I can hardly think it probable, to begin with, that the Levite minstrels of the temple would have welcomed with such a hymn as this the marriage in which the Levite chroniclers of the reign of Solomon saw the beginning of all the evils of his time (1 Kings xi. 1). No marriage stands out in the reigns that followed as one of special promise. There were many, like that of Jehoram and Athaliah, that were

* It seems hardly worth while to discuss the theory of some German critics, that the "ivory palaces" of ver. 8 are identical with the "ivory house" which Ahab built (1 Kings xxiii. 39), and that the psalm was therefore originally an epithalamium on the marriage of that king with Jezebel. The conjecture which refers it to the wedding of Jehoram and Athaliah has not much more in its favour.

fraught with evil. But in the reign of Hezekiah, towards its close, after the destruction of the Assyrians, there was a marriage, which, however disastrous in its issue, might at the time well make the hearts of the sons of Korah very hopeful. The marriage of Hezekiah and Hephzibah was even to Isaiah, in the very name of the bride, an omen for good.* It is prominent in his later prophecies as the type of something higher than itself. "*As a young man marryeth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee, and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee*" (Is. lxii. 5). He utters his fulness of joy in the same imagery.

"He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,
As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments,
And as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

(Is. lxi. 10.)

The coincidences multiply and become more striking as we proceed. Of all the descendants of David there was no one to whom the lofty words of the psalm applied with anything like the same approximation to completeness as to Hezekiah. Assume that psalmist and prophet start from the same historical type of the true Anointed, and the agreement is all but verbal. If the king of the psalm is "beautiful beyond the children of men," the promise of Isaiah (lii. 7) is that the eyes of the people shall "see the King in his beauty." If "grace is poured upon the lips of the one," of the other it is said that "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him," and "make Him of quick understanding" (Is. xi. 2, 3). If the one rides on triumphantly "because of meekness and

* Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, . . . for the Lord delighteth in thee."—Isaiah lxii. 4. Comp. the Study on "The Old Age of Isaiah."

righteousness," of the other it is declared "that righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins" (Is. xi. 5), If the "arrows" of the one are "sharp in the heart of the king's enemies," the other "shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Is. xi. 4). Whatever interpretation may be put upon the words, it will not be denied that even the prophecy which speaks of "the mighty God (*Elohim*), of "the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end" (Is. ix. 6, 7), stands parallel to the psalmist's exclamation—"Thy throne, O God (*Elohim*), is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness!"*

I pass from the ideal aspect of the king's character to the details and circumstances of the psalm, and find the same correspondence. "The house of the precious things" of Hezekiah (Is. xxxix. 2), if it were after the type that Phœnician art had introduced into both Israel and Judah, would answer to the "ivory palaces;" the "oil of gladness," to Hezekiah's "precious ointment;" the "myrrh, aloes, and cassia," to the "spices" which he exulted in. The "clothing of wrought gold," the "raiment" or tapestry "of needlework," belong to the same type of gorgeous apparel as the elaborate picture of the luxury of the daughters of Zion in Isaiah ii. 18—24. The gift from the "daughter of Tyre"—*i. e.*, from the city itself, as acknowledging the sovereignty of the

* In both cases it must be remembered that the word *Elohim* had not the same supreme incommunicable greatness which the name of God has for us; but was used not unfrequently for kings, rulers, judges. See especially Psalm lxxxii. 6, and our Lord's reference to it in John x. 34.

king of Judah—belongs to the time when, after the departure of Sennacherib, “many brought gifts to the Lord and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah ” (2 Chron. xxxii. 23), when the form which the prophet’s vision of the future took was that “the merchandise of Tyre ” should be “holiness to the Lord ” (Is. xxiii. 18). Even the opening words, “My tongue is the pen of a ready writer,” are specially characteristic of a time of scribal activity like that of Hezekiah. It may be added that the word which is rendered “queen ” in ver. 9 is not the same as that used in the earlier historical books, and is the same as that in Neh. ii. 6. In both cases the new term came probably from contact with the phraseology of Babylon, and the intercourse with that city opened by Hezekiah explains its appearance in the psalm.

4. Ps. XLVI.—This, and the two following psalms, have been referred by Mr. Perowne, in his recent “Commentary,” to the time of the invasion of Sennacherib, and there is, perhaps, on that account less need for an elaborate proof that they tally with that event, and are characterised by a very marked resemblance, in tone of thought and language, to the writings of Isaiah. It will not be disputed that in all their broad features they speak of a time of wonderful and great deliverances at the hand of God. Some special coincidences, however (some of them already noticed by Mr. Perowne), may be pointed out in each, which seem to make the evidence yet more conclusive. Take, *e. g.*, the contrast between the “waters ” that “roar and be troubled,” and the “river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,” and what is it but an echo of the like contrast in Isaiah (viii. 6, 7) between the “waters

of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory," and "the waters of Shiloah that go softly?" The "breaking of the bow, and snapping of the spear asunder, and burning of the chariot in the fire" (ver. 9)—does not this bring before us a picture identical with that presented by the true rendering of the marvellous words of Isaiah ix. 4, "All the armour of the armed men in the tumult of battle, and the garment rolled in blood, shall be for burning and fuel of fire?" May we not think of both as suggested by the scene of destruction presented when the camp of Sennacherib was left empty, and its chariots and weapons were broken up and burnt? Is not the last verse but one of the psalm, "Cease ye, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted upon the earth," the echo of the prophet's words (ii. 22, 17), "Cease ye from man; whose breath is in his nostrils," "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day?"

5. In a psalm like Ps. XLVII., with hardly any definite historical allusions, little else but a prolonged Hallelujah, the special evidence is, as might be expected, comparatively scanty. Two expressions, however, are striking enough to be characteristic. (1) The land of Canaan is called the "excellency of Jacob," and the self-same Hebrew word is used by the prophet Amos in vi. 8, and viii. 7. (2) It is said of God, in the last verse, that "the *shields* of the earth" (*i. e.*, the *princes* who shelter and defend it) "are the Lord's;" and the same word, in the same

* Compare also the words of Isaiah to Sennacherib, "By thy servants thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains."—xxxvii. 24.

sense, is used in Hosea iv. 18, where it is rendered by "rulers." To this extent therefore, we have found traces even here of the influence of the prophetic schools upon the words and phrases of the psalms.

6. Ps. XLVIII.—Here the coincidences thicken. "The holy mountain—beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth," echoes the prophetic words of Micah iv. 1, and Isaiah ii. 2, that "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow into it." The strange, peculiar phraseology which speaks of "the city of the Great King" as being "on the sides of the North," meets us in this sense in only one other passage of the Old Testament, and that is in the boastful speech that Isaiah puts into the lips of the Assyrian invader. "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, *upon the sides of the North*" (xiv. 13). Whatever may have been its meaning, whether it simply referred to the position of the Temple on the north side of the Holy City, or, as some have thought, to its being in the thoughts of Israel what the great mountain of the far north was in the mythology of Assyria, the dwelling-place of the Divine Presence, it is at least clear that the phrase was specially characteristic of the time of Hezekiah, and of the prophetic school of Isaiah. All the other verses fit in with an equally close correspondence. What words could better describe the consternation of the allies of the Assyrians, after the destruction of Sennacherib's army, than those which tell us—

"So the kings were assembled,
They passed by together;
They saw it, and so they marvelled;
They were troubled and hasted away?"

Even the mention of "the ships of Tarshish," in which some have seen a reason for referring the psalm to the reign of Jehoshaphat (comp. 1 Kings xxii. 48), and which others have taken as a bold metaphor, involving the comparison of the destruction of Sennacherib's army to a great shipwreck, may refer, I believe, to some unrecorded catastrophe affecting the Phœnician allies of Sennacherib, or the ships that were bringing fresh troops to Palestine. And the psalmist and the prophet agree here also. In predicting the downfall of all tyrants and oppressors, Isaiah proclaims among other signs of judgment, that "the day of the Lord shall be *upon all ships of Tarshish*" (ii. 16). The call of the psalmist to the people—

"Compass Zion and go round about her,
Tell the towers thereof,
Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces,
That ye may tell it to the generation following,"

has a special appropriateness as belonging to the time when Hezekiah was strengthening the fortifications of Jerusalem,* and carrying an aqueduct into the city (2 Chron. xxxii. 27—30), and when Isaiah could reproach the people, "Ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem" (xxii. 10).

7. Ps. XLIX. appears, at first sight, to be of altogether a different type from those that have preceded it. It seems to connect itself with no historical event, but to be the utterance of one who meditates on the vanity of man's hopes, and the instability of his fortunes. And yet, if I mistake not, it fits into one conspicuous fact in the reign of Heze-

* The fortifications of this period were continued on a yet grander scale by Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 14), and are referred to by the prophet Zephaniah (i. 10).

kiah, and one notable passage in Isaiah's prophecy. The sharp, or bitter, complaint which the psalm utters against the pride and haughtiness of the men of new-made wealth had a special object. As the sons of Korah paint their picture—

"Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever,
And their dwelling-places to all generations.
They call their lands after their own names;
Nevertheless, man, being in honour, abideth not,
He is like the beasts that perish;"

so does Isaiah point to one who, being a stranger, perhaps a proselyte, in Judah, had risen high in the king's favour, till he took upon himself to claim an equal rank with the old nobles of the land: "Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house and say—

"What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here,
That thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here,
As he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high,
And that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock."
(Is. xxii. 15, 16.)

As the psalm pronounces sentence on this boastful pride—

"Their beauty shall consume in the grave out of their dwelling,"

so does the prophet speak—

"Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity.
There shalt thou die,
And there the chariots of thy glory
Shall be the shame of thy Lord's house."
(Is. xxii. 18.)

Even in the glorious promise to Eliakim, the son of Hilkiash—

"I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle,"

we may find the special fact which gives point and

significance to the seemingly general utterance of the psalm—

"The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning."

8. The next hymn belonging to this group is Ps. lxxxiv. Like the two that stand first in order (Ps. xlii. and xliii.), it is the articulate utterance of the sighs of a devout worshipper who can no longer worship, who remembers the solemn pilgrimages and the glad festivals in which he had once been a sharer. It is pitched in the same key as Ps. xlii., and here and there echoes the very words :—

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord,
My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

(Ps. lxxxiv. 2.)

"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,
So longeth my soul after Thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

(Ps. xlii. 1, 2.)

It will hardly be questioned that if the explanation given of the earlier of the two psalms is in any degree adequate, it applies also with equal force to this. Here too it is enough to suppose that a devout Levite or company of Levites was hindered by the presence of Sennacherib's army from going up at the appointed seasons to take their turn in the ministration of the Temple. The later psalm has, however, some characteristic features which should not be passed over. Note, for instance, the touch which indicates the closest possible familiarity with the Temple precincts. The Levite minstrel remembers "the sparrow and the swallow" that fluttered about the courts of the sanctuary there, and built their nests upon its eaves, as they now love to haunt the enclosure of the Mosque of Omar.* Or, see again the entirely new

* Comp. Tristram's "Land of Israel," p. 182. It may be worth while to state that the notion that the words point to a temple in

force which his words acquire when we remember who and what he was that uttered them :—

“I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

These words are not the vague, indeterminate wish of a devout worshipper. They have a definite and precise meaning. They apply to the sons of Korah with a preciseness which does not attach to them when referred to any one else, for it was, as we have seen, their special function to be “*keepers of the gate of the tabernacle*” in the time of David (1 Chron. ix. 19), and sure to be appointed therefore to an analogous service in the Temple. The somewhat obscure verses in which the psalmist pours out his reminiscences of past pilgrimages will be found, I believe, to open to this key. They run thus in the Authorised Version :—

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee,
In whose heart are the ways of them ;
Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well,
The rain also filleth the pools.
They go from strength to strength ;
Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.”

Some corrections will have to be made as we go on.

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee,
In whose heart are *those* ways—”

that is, who remember those old journeys, who cannot forget one step of that *via sacra* which led them to the sanctuary itself. One scene comes before his inner vision more vividly than any other. There is a “valley of Baca,” taking its name probably from the trees which grew there—“mulberries,” as the word is translated in 2 Sam. v. 23 ; 1 Chron. xiv. 4 ;

ruins and a desecrated altar, rests upon an entire misinterpretation of the passage. What the psalmist dwells on is the contrast between the freedom and safe access which the birds of the air enjoy, and his own exclusion.

or more probably some species of balsam-tree, dropping its tears of balm, and so taking its name from the Hebrew root which signifies "weeping." With the love for detecting allusive and, as it were, ominous meanings in proper names, which was characteristic of Hebrew thought at all times, and specially so (as throughout the prophecy of Micah) of the literature of this period, he plays upon its etymological significance. As they passed through that valley, it had indeed been a valley of weeping to them. Their tears—tears of vague, almost joyful emotion rather than of sorrow—had flowed in torrents. It was as though the rain had filled the water-courses. But after that shower they had gone on their way rejoicing, stronger and stronger as they advanced, till they stood before the God of gods in Zion.

The coincidence to which I now proceed to call attention is a very simple one. 1. The resemblance of tone, language, authorship between this psalm and Ps. xlii. justifies the inference that it also was written by some Levite detained against his will "in the lands of Jordan," and "on the slopes of Hermon," somewhere, *i.e.*, in the upland Gilead country. 2. If so, then the recollection of the past journeys to Jerusalem would bring back the scenes of travel through the valley of the Jordan, and that valley, with its deep depression and tropical climate, had from the earliest date been famous for these balsam-weeping trees.*

* The true balsam, the "balm of Gilead," came from the *opobalsamum declaratum*, which once abounded in the plains of Jericho, but has now disappeared. The "false balsam tree," the *zukkum* of the natives, the *Balanites Egyptiaca* of botanists, still remains. (Comp. Ritter's "Geography of Palestine," iii. 22. Tristram's "Land of Israel," p. 202.) The question what tree is meant by the Baca ("mulberry trees" in A. V.) of 2 Samuel v. 24, must, however, remain, I fear, to perplex naturalists.

Some parched rock-ravine on the way would be that which the psalmist would think of as having been watered by the tears of pilgrims.

9. Ps. LXXXV. seems at first to belong to a later period. The opening words—

“Lord, Thou hast been favourable to our land;
Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob,”

have not unnaturally led many interpreters to refer it to the period that followed the return from the Babylonian exile. The conclusion is, however, I believe, a hasty one. The more we know of the Assyrian invasion in the time of Ahaz or Hezekiah, the more we shall have reason to believe that the great blow which fell upon Sennacherib's army was welcomed throughout both Israel and Judah as a mighty deliverance. The ten tribes had already been led into captivity. Rabshakeh, half-tauntingly, held out the prospect of a like fate to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It had already fallen on many men of the kingdom of Judah. The language of the prophet in reference to that invasion is, that the “cities shall be wasted without inhabitant;” that “the Lord should remove men far away” (Is. vi. 11, 12). He speaks not only of the “remnant of Israel,” the “remnant of Jacob,” as returning (x. 20), but in terms hardly less strong, at the very crisis of Sennacherib's invasion, of “the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah” (xxxvii. 32). When the danger was over, it would not be strange that men should speak of it as this psalm speaks. When the alliance of Hezekiah was courted by Babylon, and the murder of Sennacherib by his sons had thrown the Assyrian monarchy into at least a temporary confusion, there would be ample opportunities for many

of those who had been carried or had fled into exile to return to the land of their fathers. It will hardly be disputed that all the rest of the psalm reflects the thoughts of Isaiah's time. The vision of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, is the same with the psalmist as with the prophet. It may be added that the prayer of the psalm, "Turn us, O God of our salvation," is identical with that which is the ever-recurring burden of Ps. lxxx. ; and that this, beyond question, points to a time when what was prominent in men's minds was the captivity of "Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh," the captivity, *i.e.*, as in this psalm, of "Jacob," rather than that of Judah, as would have been the case in the Babylonian exile. The efforts which Hezekiah had made, at an earlier period of his reign, to gather the remnant of those tribes into his own kingdom (2 Chron. xxx. 1—12) would scarcely fail to be renewed with yet greater success when he occupied so glorious a position as that which followed on the retreat of the Assyrian army.

10. Ps. lxxxvii. is in many respects the most striking of the whole group. Every word is pregnant with historical significance. The hopes, the prayers, the prophecies which it embodies, all bear the stamp of Isaiah's mind. Both the importance and, it must be added, the obscurity of the psalm call for a more expanded treatment than I have applied to the others. I correct the Authorised Version as I go on.

(1.) "That which He hath founded is in the holy mountains."

The words might, of course, have been uttered at any time in the history of the monarchy of Judah. It will hardly be disputed that they have a special force as belonging to the time when that "moun-

tain" was spoken of as it is in Isaiah xxv. 6, 7: the "mountain of the Lord's house," "exalted above the hills" (Is. ii. 3), when the sons of Korah had already spoken of it as in Psalm xlvi.

- (2.) "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion,
More than all the dwellings of Jacob;
(3.) Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O thou city of God."

Here again the parallelism with Ps. xlvi. 2 is very striking; and we can hardly mistake the reference to some burst of prophecy like that already referred to in Isaiah ii.

- (4.) "I will name Rahab and Babel as among those that know me."

The first of these two names, used as it is used here, is nearly enough in itself to fix the date of the psalm. Originally conveying the idea of pride and ferocity, it meets us in Job ix. 13, where that meaning is at least adequate.

"The helpers of pride (*Rahab*) do stoop under him."

Possibly, however, even there, and with hardly any doubt in Job xxvi. 12, it becomes the name of some fierce monster of the deep, to be classed with leviathan, or the dragon.

"He divideth the sea with his power,
And by his understanding he smiteth the proud monster"
(*Rahab*).

In nearly parallel language to this, but with a new historical significance, and at the same time as the psalm that we are now considering, we find in Psalm lxxxix. 9, 10,

"Thou rulest the raging of the sea:
When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them;
Thou hast broken *Rahab* in pieces."

Here the marginal reading rightly explains Rahab by Egypt; but it acquires that meaning by the

poetic boldness which takes the crocodile of the Nile as the symbol of that kingdom.* But the use of the word in this sense is pre-eminently characteristic of Isaiah (comp. li. 9) :—

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord;
Awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old:
Art thou not it that hast cut *Rahab* (*i.e.*, smitten Egypt) and
wounded the dragon?”

So again in a passage which our version obscures, and which must therefore be re-translated (xxx. 7) :—

“The Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose,
Therefore have I cried concerning this:
They are *Rahab* (proud, mighty, ferocious as the monstrous
forms of their own river), and yet they sit still,” (*i.e.*, they
do nothing—no help will come from them).

We get, therefore, this clue to the meaning of the words before us: “A time is coming, seen as if already present, when Egypt and Babylon shall take their place among the worshippers of Jehovah.” We get, that is, a hope identical in substance with that of Isaiah xix. :—

“In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with
Assyria,
Even a blessing in the midst of the land;
Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying:
‘Blessed be Egypt my people,
And Assyria the work of mine hands,
And Israel my inheritance.’”

The substitution of Babylon for Assyria is precisely what we might expect from the intercourse with the former kingdom, and the seeming overthrow of the latter towards the close of Hezekiah's reign. The religious zeal which had been so conspicuous in the early part of that king's reign was working yet more actively at its close. The gifts that were brought to the king were, in part, tributes

* So in Psalm lxxiv. 13, 14, the destruction of Pharaoh's hosts is compared to that of the dragon and leviathan; and in Psalm lxviii. the power of Egypt is named as “the beast of the reed.”

to the majesty of Jehovah. What had happened in the time of David and Solomon happened once more. Men of other races and creeds came to acknowledge the great name of the God of Israel. The psalm, written, as I believe, for some solemn reception of such converts, looks forward to a time when the Church of Israel shall be a church universal, including in it all peoples, and nations, and languages, old enmities passed away, and the oppressors of the people changed into fellow-worshippers and allies.

- (4.) "Behold Philistia, and Tyre, and Ethiopia : *
They too are born there ;"

that is, are born again into a new and higher life, and reckoned as citizens of the holy city. Here too we get significant coincidences with Hezekiah's reign. (1.) As Isaiah had foretold (xiv. 29), he smote the Philistines, and reduced them to subjection (2 Kings xviii. 3). This was a token that the Lord had "founded Zion." (2.) The mention of Tyre falls in with what has been already said in connection with Ps. xlv. The reign of Hezekiah witnessed a renewal of the intercourse with Tyre which had begun under David and Solomon, and this was accompanied by a partial conversion, and by gifts and tribute in token of it. (3.) Ethiopia too had come in Hezekiah's reign into fresh prominence in connection with Judah. It was through the rumour of the approach of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, with an army mighty enough to cope even with the hosts of Assyria, synchronizing as it did with the destruction of the division of his

* *Cush* in the Hebrew. The "Moriains' land" of the Prayer-Book, is meant to be "the land of the Moors," and comes to us, through Coverdale's translation of the Bible, from Luther's "Mohrenland," which seemed to him a popular equivalent for Ethiopia.

army engaged in the siege of Jerusalem, that Sennacherib was led to give up his plans of conquest (Is. xxxvii. 9). The words of Zephaniah (iii. 10) show that the "dispersed" of Jacob were already thought of as bearing their witness to the nations "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia."

"And of Zion it shall be said,

(5.) 'These men, one by one, were born in her,'

And the Most High himself establisheth her;

(6.) Jehovah counts them, as he registers the nations.

'They too were born therein;

(7.) Singers and dancers shall be there,

Crying, 'All my fountains are in Thee.'"

The thought which had before been defined by the names of individual nations now rises into a wider catholicity. The Psalmist and his brother Levites exult in this admission of converts, as they would do in a national victory. It is a time for songs and dances. They find in Jerusalem the fountains of waters that make glad the city of God.

Traces of this admission of proselytes meet us, in different directions, in the later history of the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah pronounced a solemn blessing on "*the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord.*" Of them he says, that "Jehovah will bring them to his holy mountains and make them joyful in his house of prayer" (Is. lvi. 7). He calls "every one that thirsteth" to the waters (lv. 1). In a later reign, one of the truest and most devout of the king's servants, the friend and protector of the prophet of Anathoth, is Ebed-melech, the *Ethiopian* eunuch (Jer. xxxviii. 7).

11. The hymns of the sons of Korah end with Ps. lxxxviii., and plaintive and beautiful as it is, it presents, in comparison with most of the others, but few

points of special historical interest. The singular combination of names in the superscription, joining the sons of Korah with Heman the Ezrahite, suggests the thought that it was probably an elegy of ancient date by the latter, revived and adapted by the former. Direct references to passing history there are none. And yet one can hardly read it, I think, without feeling that it is pitched in the same key as the psalm of Hezekiah, "when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness," with this difference only, that there the danger and the calamity are overpast, and that here they are present, pressing, overwhelming. In both there is the vague shrinking from death which overpowers even the hope of immortality. The king can only say—

"The grave cannot praise thee,
Death cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth."
(Is. xxxviii. 16.)

The psalmist utters the same feeling just as strongly:—

- (11.) "Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave?
Or thy faithfulness in destruction?"
- (12.) Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

I do not wish to press the inference from this resemblance beyond its proper limits. So far as it goes, it at least falls in with the view which I have maintained. There is, at all events, nothing in it to militate against the conclusion which I have endeavoured to establish, that the Psalms of the Sons of Korah, over and above their value as devotional poems, have a definite historical significance, as belonging to and illustrating the reign of Hezekiah. That conclusion I now submit to those who find any interest in such inquiries.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF JOB.



THIS is not the place for a full inquiry into the origin and character of the Book of Job, but I am unwilling to let slip an opportunity for stating briefly the grounds on which I have been led to the conclusion that that wonderful poem came into the literature of Israel through the intercourse with the people of Southern Arabia, of which the visit of the Queen of Sheba was the great representative instance.

(1.) Part of the work I may fairly assume to be already done. The theories which assign the book in question to a comparatively late period, to the time of the Babylonian captivity, or to that of the Persian sovereignty, have been satisfactorily met by Canon Cook (Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. JOB), and M. Renan ("Livre de Job," p. xlii.). The allusion to his name in Ezek. xiv. 14,* the manifest reproduction of what has the stamp of originality in the poem in the writings of Isaiah (comp. Job xiv. 11, Is. xix. 5) and Jeremiah (comp. Job iii. 1—10 and Jeremiah xx. 14—18),† the archaic character of

* "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness."

† It will be well to subjoin the parallel passages referred to:—

Job xiv. 11.—"As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up."	Isaiah xix. 5.—"And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up."
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thought and language, these are more than sufficient, in M. Renan's judgment, to counterbalance the arguments drawn by Gesenius and others from the presence of real or supposed Chaldaisms, and lead him to fix on a period not later than the reign of Hezekiah as its probable date. Mr. Cook rightly, as I believe, sees in these and other phenomena evidence of a yet more remote antiquity.

(2.) That antiquity has been carried up in a Jewish conjecture (it does not deserve the name of a tradition), which has almost become current among inferior commentators, to a definite point. "The book," it has been said, "was written by Moses during the forty years in which he sojourned with Jethro in the wilderness. It was prior to the Exodus, and so the absence of any reference to the work and law of Moses is accounted for. It represents the patriarchal worship of which Jethro was a priest. It shows a knowledge of Egypt such as

Job iii. 3-6.—"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months."

Job iii. 11.—"Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?"

Jeremiah xx. 14, 15.—"Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad."

Jer. xx. 18.—"Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame."

Moses must have acquired." Admitting that so far there is nothing self-contradictory in the hypothesis, it must yet be said that it is purely conjectural, and in the highest degree improbable. Differences of language, thought, character are all against it. There is not the slightest approximation to a tradition of any value in its favour. There is no trace of the influence of the book in any portion of the Old Testament earlier than the Psalms and Proverbs. It is all but incredible that such a fact would have been passed over, if known, in a life related so fully as that of Moses.

(3.) We cannot, however, ignore the phenomena which were the starting-point of this hypothesis. There is an entire absence of any local Israelite character in the poem. The name of Moses, those even of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are as though they were not. There is no recognition of any distinctively Mosaic institutions, no knowledge of a law written on tables of stone by which God had revealed to man His will, or to any hereditary priesthood to which the power of offering sacrifice exclusively belonged. Of the three possible theories for explaining these facts—(1.) that of Israelite authorship prior in time to the Exodus; (2.) that of the book having come from the literature of some other nation into that of Israel; (3.) that of an Israelite writer at some period subsequent to the Exodus having divested himself of all that was distinctive in the faith and life of his people, and thrown himself into what was common to Israel and other Semitic races,—the first and third must, it is believed, yield in likelihood to the second. There is an almost infinite improbability in supposing such a book to

have existed among the sons of Jacob, either on their settlement in Egypt, or when they were crushed under its bondage. It is hardly less improbable that any Israelite, after the faith of Israel had been defined by the Law of Moses, would have had either the power or the will to throw his mind (unless under conditions like those discussed hereafter) into a different stage of belief and life.

(4.) Before passing on to the inquiry where we may look for the birth-place of this great poem, we have yet to note one other condition of the problem. If the book does not bear the stamp of Israelite religion, it is still essentially Semitic, we might almost say, essentially Hebrew. It reproduces in great things and small the religion and the life of the patriarchal period, as they come before us in the book of Genesis. The Divine Name throughout the whole poem (with the exception of the prologue and the epilogue, and the words (xxviii. 28) which come as the oracle that is to relieve the mind of the sufferer from its perplexity and silence his rebellion) is God, the Almighty, the name (*El-Shaddai*) by which Moses was told that He had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* Job offers burnt-offerings for his children,† as Abraham had offered. The friends of Job sacrifice seven bullocks and seven rams, as Balaam had taught Balak to sacrifice.‡ Divine knowledge was spoken of as communicated in "thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men," just as the great revelation to Abraham was

* Exod. vi. 3; Job xv. 25, xxii. 26, xxiii. 16, and *passim*.

† Job i. 5.

‡ Job xlii. 8; Num. xxiii. 1.

made when a "deep sleep" and "horror of great darkness fell upon him."* The spirit of the purest Monotheism reigns throughout, protesting not so much against the later and lower forms of idolatry, as against that adoration of the sun in his strength and the moon in her brightness,† which was the first downward step, even as Abraham, in the Jewish legends, was said to have turned in succession from sun and moon and stars to worship their unseen Maker. It may fairly be inferred from these points of agreement that we must look for the origin of the Book of Job to some branch of the Semitic family, connected more or less closely with Israel, and that there is a far greater probability of its being found within the circle of the descendants of Abraham than outside it.

(5.) It remains to be seen what light is thrown upon the question by the names of persons and places in the book itself. Some of these might at first sight seem to suggest an Edomite origin. Teman, to which Eliphaz belongs, is, in the genealogy of the descendants of Esau, the name of one of his grandsons, Eliphaz itself that of his eldest son.‡ Teman was famed of old for its "wisdom" and its counsel; Edom, the whole which included Teman as a part for its "wise men" and its "understanding."§ There may well have been in Edom, as it was before David conquered it, a knowledge and a culture capable of producing such a book as this. But the very fact that it was so conquered, the natural hate and antipathy which grew out of the conquest, waxing

* Job iv. 13; Gen. xv. 12.

† Job xxxi. 26.

‡ Job ii. 11; Gen. xxxvi. 10, 11.

§ Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. 8.

stronger and stronger as the years passed on,* would make the reception of a poem belonging to the vanquished people into the literature of their conquerors all but incredible. The very name Teman, distinguished as it is from Seir, brought into close connection, in one case, with Arabia and Dedanim,† and in the Book of Job itself with Sheba, points further to the south-east, to some part of the wider country occupied by the descendants of Esau, the district probably between the Nejd and the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

(6.) Other names point in the same direction. (a.) That of Uz appears, obviously with an ethnological rather than a personal significance, in the list of the sons of Shem, in company with Asshur and Aram.‡ With a slight variation we find it still in connexion with Aram, and Haran the city of Nahor, in the branch of the Semitic family, from which the migration of Abraham was an offshoot,§ and again among the descendants of Esau.|| (b.) Bildad the Shuite stands probably in the same relation to Shuah that Eliphaz does to Teman, and Shuah appears in the list of the sons of Abraham by Keturah,¶ along with Midian, Sheba, Dedan, names essentially Arabian, and somewhat more strangely with Asshurim. (c.) Job is said to have been the greatest of all the *Beni-Kedem*, the men or children of the East,** and these children of the East (the name is in its very nature somewhat wide in range and vague in meaning) seem also to be connected, though less closely, with Abraham.†† They too were as famous for their wis-

* Compare the language of Ps. lx. 8, 9; lxxxiii. 6; Amos i. 11; and Obadiah throughout. † Isa. xxi. 11—14; Job vi. 19.

‡ 1 Chron. i. 17.

§ Gen. xxii. 21.

|| 1 Chron. i. 42.

¶ Gen. xxv. 2.

** Job i. 3.

†† Gen. xxv. 6.

dom as the men of Teman or of Egypt.* (*d.*) The names that appear incidentally point to the region lying between the lower Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, on the one side, and the Red Sea on the other. The Chaldeans and Sabæans attack the country, as if it were exposed to hostile raids both from north and south.† The troops of Teman and Sheba are the representatives of all great armies.‡ When the range of vision becomes wider, the thoughts of the writer pass, not to Tarshish, or Hermon, or Lebanon, but to Ophir and Ethiopia.§ The conclusion to which all these facts converge, is that the scene and characters of the poem belong to some region in which the tribes known as the descendants of Keturah and those of Esau were neighbours; and the presence of the name of Sheba among the former,|| no less than the mention of it in Job, at least warrants the supposition that the poem, even if it had an Edomite, *i.e.*, Temanite origin, was at any rate known also in the land from which the Queen of the South,¶ the Queen of Sheba, came.

(7.) Many other phenomena of the book fall in with this conclusion. (*a.*) Assuming it to have been written in a region in which tribes claiming a descent from Abraham through Keturah were mingled with those who traced it through Esau, we have what explains the close affinity between the phase of religious life which it exhibits and that which we find in the Book of Genesis,—the strict Monotheism, the name El-Shaddai, the mention of the Sons of God as intermediate between God and man. It adds

* 1 Kings iv. 30.

† Job vi. 19.

‡ Gen. xxv. 3.

† Job i. 15, 17.

§ Job xxiii. 24; xxviii. 19.

¶ Matt. xii. 42.

some force to the interpretation which sees in ch. xxxi. 33,* a reference to the history of the Fall, and in ch. xxii. 16 to that of the deluge.† (b.) The forms of false religion which Job disclaims are not those of the Canaanite nations, the worship of Baal, Ashtaroath, Moloch, but, as I have said, the first downward step, the substitution of the visible for the invisible, the Sabæan adoration of sun, moon, and stars.‡ (c.) Bold as are the questionings of this book, we must remember that they too had a parallel in the life of Abraham. He also had set himself to face the question whether the world were governed righteously, had recoiled from the thought of an indiscriminate punishment, and had dared to ask the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"§ (d.) The noble description of the war-horse in ch. xxxix. 19—25 is far more natural in the mouth of an Arabian than it would have been in the early history of a people whose chieftains and judges rode on white asses, who used no horses, even in battle, till the time of the monarchy, by whom the employment of cavalry was looked upon as a necessary evil, almost as a sin.|| The language of the Hebrew poets on this subject is not in the tone of glory and exultation, but "a horse is counted but a vain thing."¶ "He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse."¶ So, in like manner, the mention of the ostrich, native in South Arabia, but not found in Palestine, of the

* "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom."

† "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood."

‡ Job xxxi. 26, 28.

§ Gen. xviii. 23—25.

|| Judg. v. 10; 1 Sam. viii. 11; Deut. xvii. 16.

¶ Ps. xxxiii. 17; cxlvii. 10.

peacock, never seen by Israelites till Solomon explored the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean,* of the mines which the writer might have seen in the Sinaitic peninsula,† probably also that of the "wild ass" and the "unicorn," all indicate that region as the point of view from which the writer looked out upon the world of nature.‡ Here he portrays what he was familiar with at home. In the description of the crocodile (leviathan) and the hippopotamus (behemoth),§ which he must have seen probably in the upper valley of the Nile, there is more the tone of wonder and amazement, as of one on whom the strange forms of animal life in another country had made an ineffaceable impression. (e.) What is true of the passages that bear upon the zoology of the country in which the writer lived, is true also of the knowledge of astronomy which appears in it.|| The names of the constellations, Aisch, Cesil, Cimah, Mazzaroth, are not Hebrew, and are, probably at least, Arabic. (f.) When the Israelites take possession of their inheritance they find no nations there but the seven that are enumerated as belonging to Canaan. The Philistines occupy the sea-coast. A remnant of the Anakim are found in Hebron. But the Book of Job describes fully a people of inferior race and more brutal habits, a troglodyte tribe, living a wretched life in caves, and subsisting on plunder,¶ the remnant probably of the old races, Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, Horim, which had once dwelt in and around Seir.** Attacked on all sides, crushed by the

* Job xxxix. 13; 1 Kings x. 23. † Job xxviii. 1—10.

‡ Job xxxix. 5—12.

§ Job ix. 9; xxxviii. 21, 22.

¶ Job ix. 9; xxxviii. 21, 22.

** Gen. xiv. 5, 6; Deut. ii. 10—12. We may note in connection with this the mention of Rephaim in the Hebrew of Job xxvi. 5.

‡ Job xl. 15—24; xli. 1—24.

¶ Job xxiv. 1—12.

northern hordes of Shinar, and by the Edomites, they seem to have found refuge in the less accessible southern border country of Edom, on the confines of Sheba, and to have been looked upon with scorn and loathing by the nobler Semitic tribes to which Job and his friends belonged. (*g.*) Less decisive, but not to be passed over, is the possible reference to the Pyramids of Egypt in ch. iii. 13, 14.* One who had seen the crocodile and the hippopotamus might well have seen them also.

(8.) With this approximation to the birthplace of the poem we may enter on the inquiry as to the time and manner of its admission into the sacred literature (to use the word Canon would be an anachronism) of the Israelites. And here there is, it is believed, but little room for doubt. (*a.*) Before the time of Solomon, the Jews had but scanty knowledge of any Edomites beyond the range of Seir. The conquests of David carried them to the Gulf of Akaba, the commerce of his son to the southern shores of the Red Sea. When the Queen of the South came as from "the uttermost part of the earth," it is as one who had heard in a far country of Solomon's wisdom.† The "spices and the gold and the precious stones" which she brought (the pearls and the coral of the Red Sea, the topaz and sapphire of Ethiopia, the gold of Ophir, the spices of Arabia) were as things new and startling. Then it was that the Israelites began to compare the wisdom of Solomon with that of "all the children of the east country."‡ The very dedication prayer of the Temple supposes the presence

* "Then had I been at rest with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves."

† 1 Kings x. 10.

‡ 1 Kings iv. 30.

of "strangers" coming out of a far land for the sake of the name of Jehovah,* proselytes to a worship with which they were previously in sympathy, probably therefore of the Semitic family of nations, descendants of Esau, or Keturah, or Ishmael. It was the conspicuous glory of that reign that West and East should both bring their gifts, the "kings of Tarshish and the isles," the "kings of Sheba and Seba." The gold of Sheba is to be "given to him continually."† (b.) After the reign of Solomon, on the other hand, the intercourse was soon interrupted. Even during its later years the strength of Edom revived under Hadad, and when the monarchy had been crippled by the disruption, the Kings of Judah were not able to secure the approaches to the Red Sea. Jehoshaphat made an unsuccessful attempt to revive it, and the attempt was never repeated. The visit of the Queen of Sheba continued to stand alone, with nothing parallel to it in the later history. At no period before or after Solomon was there any intercourse between the wisdom and culture of Israel and those of Arabia. (c.) It may be noted that the pilgrimage of the Queen of the South was far more than the visit of the ruler of a half-barbarous people to gaze on the magnificence of a higher civilisation. She came "because she heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah;" to "prove him with hard questions," and she "communed with him of all that was in her heart."‡ To suppose that these questions were such as the base imagination of later Judaism invented for her is to lose sight of the whole meaning of her history.§ To believe that questions

* 1 Kings viii. 41. † Ps. lxxii. 10, 15. ‡ 1 Kings x. 1—3.

§ See Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. "Solomon."

like those which occupy the speakers in the Book of Job were then hotly debated among the wise men of the children of the East, and that her own mind was full of them, is simply to rest in the conclusion to which every fact converges.

(9.) We have yet to add indirect evidence of another kind. It is precisely from this period that we begin to find traces of the influence of this poem on the thoughts and language of other sacred writers.

(a.) The questions and perplexities portrayed in Ps. lxxiii. are precisely such as the Book of Job might at once have suggested and answered. Ps xci. is an echo, verse by verse almost, of the words in which Eliphaz the Temanite describes the good man's life.* (b.) The book of Proverbs presents yet more striking parallelisms. The central truth of the whole book, "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom," is but the reproduction, in the form of a received maxim, of what meets us in Job with all the freshness and power of an oracle from heaven.† Here, as in Job, wisdom is compared with rubies.‡ The use of the numerals "six, yea, seven," to express indefinite multitude, is common to both.§ The wonderful speech of Wisdom in her creative energy in Prov. viii. is too closely parallel to that of Jehovah in Job xxxviii. for the resemblance to be accidental.

(c) The expression of interest and wonder at the marvels of brute life appears, though in different forms and with different applications, in Job xxxix. and Prov. xxx. It has been thought probable by many critics that in the words of Agur in Prov. xxx.,

* Job v. 17—23.

† Job xxviii. 28; Prov. i. 7; ix. 10. Another echo of it is found in Ps. cxi. 10.

‡ Prov. viii. 11; Job xxviii. 18. § Prov. vi. 16; Job v. 19.

and those of King Lemuel in ch. xxxi., we have direct importations from the gnomic literature of Arabia. (*d.*) It would be unwise to lay much stress on a point so questionable as the date and authorship of Ecclesiastes, but here also, under all varieties of form, the questions discussed are substantially the same as those debated between Job and his friends,—the real or apparent disorders of life, the unequal distribution of its joys and sorrows; and the answer is also the same: as the “fear of Jehovah” is the “beginning of wisdom,” so is it also the “whole duty” or work of man.* (*e.*) Later echoes of the book, in Hezekiah’s hymn,† in Isaiah’s prophecy,‡ in Jeremiah’s imprecation,§ may be noticed as interesting, but do not add much to the evidence already adduced, except as showing that a book to which men went as to a fountain of noble thought and imagery must have been well known and recognised.

(10.) The evidence is, it is believed, sufficiently strong to justify the conclusion that in the Book of Job we have the result of that short contact between the religion and culture of the Hebrew and the Arabian branches of the Semitic family which took place during the reign of Solomon. Further than this it is hardly possible to go. Whether it were translated, with or without additions, from a poem previously extant, or was the work of one of the “strangers from a far country,” after he had settled in Israel as a proselyte, bringing forth out of his treasure things new and old, the old thoughts and questions and life, and the new faith, or was written

* Job xxviii. 28; Eccles. xii. 13.

† Job vii. 4—10; Isa. xxxviii. 10—15.

‡ Job xiv. 11; Isa. xix. 5.

§ Job iii. 1—10; Jer. xx. 14—18.

by a poet of Israel coming in contact with these strangers and their literature, and capable of incorporating what he thus heard into his own mind, and fusing them by the fire of genius into a crystalline whole, this we must leave uncertain. In either case we have what explains phenomena that are otherwise inexplicable,—the prevalence of the name Jehovah in some parts of the book, of El and Shaddai in others, its harmony with the earlier faith of Israel, and the numerous indications of an entirely different region from Palestine as that which the writer was familiar with. In either case we may watch with interest the welcome given, it may be, by Solomon himself, it may be, by the thinkers and poets of his time, to a wisdom which was not their own, but which they recognised as having come from God to their brethren, the impulse which it gave to thought and imagination, the support which it supplied to faith.

(11.) It remains for us to notice briefly some points which seem, at first sight, inconsistent with this theory, and may probably be urged as objections to it.* (a.) M. Renan sees in the mention of the Chaldeans in ch. i. 17, a proof that the antiquity of the book cannot be carried further back than the reign of Hezekiah, when that people first came to be formidable to Israel and Judah. The answer is that it does not follow that they were also unknown to the inhabitants of central and southern Arabia. The name of the Kasdim (the Hebrew form of Chaldean) meets us at a remote period,† and raids like that of Gen. xiv. were possible at any period after they had made their appearance on the

* *Livre de Job*, S. I. p. xl.

† Gen. xi. 28; xv. 7.

plain of the Euphrates. (b.) The appearance of Satan has been thought by many commentators to indicate a later date than the captivity, as having grown out of close contact with Persian dualism. Here, however, it is plain, as M. Renan maintains,* that the accusing angel of Job is as different as possible from the Ahriman of the Avesta, and, it may be added, that the name Sheitan has, as far as we can trace, been widely spread for ages throughout Arabia, and that it is quite conceivable that, if it first came into use outside the limits of Israel, it may have originated there. (c.) The mention of the river Jordan in the description of behemoth,† may seem to indicate familiarity with the scenery of Palestine. But here the hypothesis in question precisely explains the phenomenon. Nothing could be more natural than that a stranger writing or translating in Palestine should select a river with which his hearers were familiar in order to help them to a true conception of the strange beast (hippopotamus or elephant), which they had not seen. (d.) References to facts or ideas which we find in the Book of Genesis are in like manner so far from being difficulties in the way of receiving the theory, that they take their place in the induction which led to it. So received, they bring with them, in addition to the interest of this re-appearance, whatever force may attach to a remote tradition coming down from a given point of divergence, through an independent channel.

* *Livre de Job*, S. I. p. xxxix.

† Job xl. 23, "He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth;" or, as Renan translates it, "Il serait sans crainte, si le Jourdain montait à sa gueule." The mention of the unicorn (Job xxxix. 12), probably identical with *Bos primigenius*, *Bison priscus*, or some extinct gigantic species of *Urus*, points in the same direction. (See Tristram's "Land of Israel," p. 11.)

NOTE.—It may be well to add a few words on the treatment of this question by Dean Stanley, in his second volume of "Lectures on the Jewish Church." It will be seen that he (p. 244), indicating with his usual force the points of contact between the Book of Job and the Proverbs of Solomon, follows M. Renan in regarding the former as derived "years or centuries afterwards" from the latter. I own that there still seems to me an immense preponderance of evidence on the other side. At what period after Solomon would an Israelite have been likely to throw himself so entirely into the spirit of an earlier period and a distant country, or an Idumean to have turned to the Proverbs of Solomon as a textbook of wisdom? Would the Jews of the captivity, with the intense hatred of Edom shown in Ps. cxxxvii. 7, have been likely then to receive an Idumean poem into their sacred books? Apart too from these historical difficulties, I must add that it seems to me almost inconceivable that the overflowing grandeur of the poem should have grown out of the calm precision of the proverb. I could almost as soon accept the theory that the Gospel of St. John was an echo of the teaching of the Apostolic Fathers and the Gnostics of the second century.

THE OLD AGE OF ISAIAH.

THE death of Hezekiah forms a dividing-point in the life of the great prophet of glad tidings between what we know with certainty and the obscurities of conjecture and tradition. Up to that point we trace his history, partly through his own writings, partly through what is recorded of him in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. We see the solemn call to his work as the spokesman of the Lord of Hosts in the vision, full of awe and sorrow, in the year that King Uzziah died, the insight then given him into the evils that were eating into the nation's life, the foresight of the penalties sure to follow upon those evils (vi. 1—13). After a period of comparative tranquillity under Jotham, he comes before us in full activity, when the weakness and wickedness of Ahaz were wearying both men and God (vii. 13). He rebukes king and people for their falsehood and cowardice; bids them look on without fear at the attempts of the kings of Syria and Israel to depose the dynasty of David and to set up an unknown ruler, some son of Tabeal, as their own creature in its place (vii. 4—6); warns them of the coming flood of fierce invaders from Assyria, and tells them that, while it will sweep away utterly the nations of which they were most afraid (vii. 8), it would also be in God's hands an

instrument to punish *them* and make their land, the land of Judah, desolate (vii. 17—25). With the reign of Hezekiah the brightest phase of his life begins. The king is young, and he is his chosen friend and counsellor. We trace his influence in the restored worship, the revived unity of national life, the glorious Passover, the zeal against idolatry and its defilements, perhaps also in the *thoroughness* which did not shrink from the work of reform even when it involved the destruction of a relic so venerable and, as it might seem, so sacred, as the Brazen Serpent (2 Kings xviii. 1—8; 2 Chron. xxix. 1; xxx. 27). When the armies of Sennacherib fill men's minds with terror it is to him that king and people turn, and from his lips comes the assurance of a marvellous deliverance (2 Kings xix. 2; 2 Chron. xxxii. 20; Isa. xxxvii.). When the king is sick unto death he is at once prophet and physician (2 Kings xx. ; Isa. xxxviii.). When Hezekiah, in the glory and state of his later years, is tempted to court the alliance of the rising kingdom of Babylon, just asserting its independence against the overwhelming power of Assyria, the prophet, faithful to the last, rebukes even the devout and good king, warns him of the coming judgments, and bids him trust in no arm of flesh, but in the might of the Lord of Hosts (2 Kings xx. 12—19; Isa. xxxix.).

But here our knowledge ends. All that comes later is wrapt in legend and tradition. Jewish writers tell us that he protested against the sins of Manasseh and was put to death with a singular refinement of cruelty, and Christian commentators find a reference to this in the mention, among the heroes of faith, of those who "were sawn asunder" (Heb.

xi. 37). A wilder fable* reports that the ostensible ground of the sentence was the charge of blasphemy in having said that he had "seen the Lord" (Isa. vi. 1), and that the king's baseness was aggravated by the fact that his mother Hephzibah was the prophet's daughter. It is now proposed to fill up the gap thus left from notices scattered, fragmentary, incidental, in what may well be described as the second volume of Isaiah's writings, the great closing series of his prophecies which, in our present division, fill the last twenty-six chapters of the book that bears his name. It is possible, I believe, to reconstruct out of those fragments the personal history of the man, and much of the history of a time of which we otherwise know but little. Once again the pictures of the past, long obscured and faded, will grow clear, and the *Old Age of Isaiah* will come before us with a new completeness.

At the death of Hezekiah, the prophet must have been already far advanced in life. Sixty-one years had passed since that vision in the temple in the year that King Uzziah died, and he could hardly have been under twenty when he entered on an office that called for so much energy and insight. What had been the last great interests of the old man of fourscore during the reign of the king who loved and honoured him? The later chapters of the first part of his works supply the answer. They were (1) the prospect, long delayed, of an heir to the throne of David; (2) the vision, long familiar to the prophet's mind, and recently revived, of a calamity about to fall at no distant period on both

* See the article "Manasseh," in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

king and people,—a life of exile in the far lands watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates.

(1.) Manasseh was but twelve years old at his accession, and it is natural to infer that Hezekiah's marriage with his mother had taken place comparatively late in life. The name of that mother is given as Hephzi-bah (2 Kings xxi. 1). The prominence given in the king's elegiac "writing, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness," to the thought of doing a father's work, should his life be spared, in the training of his child, indicates either that that child was as yet unborn or still in his infancy. His passionate craving for life appears in this light with a nobler aspect:—

"The living, the living he shall praise thee,
The father to the children shall make known thy truth."

Such a marriage, we may well believe, would have been hailed by Isaiah at the time as likely to be fruitful in blessing. All its circumstances would acquire in the light of his hopes a new and mystical significance. Even when the hopes had been disappointed he would yet turn to them as suggesting the fittest imagery for the fuller and diviner hopes which still remained. Throughout the later chapters this thought recurs again and again in varied aspects:—

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,
He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,
*As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments,
And as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*" lxi. 10.

"As I live, saith the Lord,
Thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament,
And bind them on thee, as a bride doeth." xlix. 18.

"*As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,
So shall thy God rejoice over thee.*" lxii. 5.

And that there may be no doubt what marriage is in his thoughts, he turns, with his characteristic fondness for finding a deep significance in names (as *e.g.*, in Immanuel, vii. 14; Shear-jashub, vii. 3; Maher-shalal-hash-baz,* viii. 3), to that of the queen whose espousals he had witnessed :—

“Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;
Neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate:
But thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah (‘my delight is in her’),
And thy land Beulah (‘married’):
For the Lord delighteth in thee,
And thy land shall be married.”†

lxii. 4.

(2.) In the earlier days of his prophetic work, Isaiah had foretold, distinctly, though with some vagueness as to times and seasons, what was given him to see of the great period of the world's history then just opening, and the foreign policy of Hezekiah had been guided for the most part by his foresight. First, Assyria was to be the scourge of God, “the rod of his indignation” (vii. 17—viii. 8; x. 1—11). Then that burden should pass away. The great monarchy should crumble and fall (x. 12—19, 24—26). From Egypt, unstable and treacherous, little was to be hoped or feared (xix. 1—25). But another empire should rise in its place mightier and more terrible. “The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,” should become the oppressor of the nations, and lead Israel into captivity (xiv. 2). Babylon was to succeed Nineveh. To Isaiah accordingly Hezekiah's policy in courting

* Another remarkable instance will be noticed later. Rahab also becomes, in a text mistranslated, and much misquoted, both *nomen et omen*.

† The credit of having made this coincidence familiar to English readers must be assigned to the late Professor Blunt, “Scriptural Coincidences,” iii. 6.

the king of Babylon seemed fatally suicidal (xxxix. 5—8), accelerating the destined end. But he saw also, in his trust in a righteous Ruler of the world, that that empire, founded as it was on brute colossal strength, could not stand. From those who had come as messengers from the king of Babylon, or from previous intercourse with Israelites who had travelled there,* he had already heard the names of new tribes, young and vigorous, that were hovering on its frontiers, and had been led to see in those tribes the future destroyers of the "Golden City" that oppressed the world.

"I will stir up the *Medes* against them." xiii. 17.

"Go up, O *Elam* (= Persia): besiege, O *Media*." xxi. 2.

We may infer then that before the death of Hezekiah (probably about the year B.C. 713, when the king's policy led him to put together his scattered prophecies as witnesses to a later generation), the Medes and Persians were already familiar to the prophet's mind as destined to overthrow Babylon, and so to be the deliverers of Israel. One who had that knowledge might easily learn more. He might hear that that people differed from Assyrians and Chaldeans with a difference which brought them into close sympathy with the faith of Israel. They too were monotheistic, bowed down before no idols, were worshippers of the God of Heaven, saw in Light and the glory of the Sun the one visible symbol of the Divine Lord.† Assume only that Isaiah

* Jonah's journey to Nineveh (Jonah iii. 2), and Jeremiah's to Euphrates (Jer. xiii. 5), may be mentioned as showing that such intercourse was at least probable.

† See Ezra i. 2; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22; Herod. i. 131. Compare also the article "Magi" in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

learnt this, and can we wonder that his faith in their future should become stronger? Here at last was a people before whom "Bel should bow down, and Nebo stoop" (xlvi. 1). The leader of that people, bearing what was probably a titular name embodying their faith, Koresh, or in its Greek form, Cyrus, *the Sun*,* would come, whenever the right time arrived, as a deliverer. With a wonderful expansion of thought, far above the narrowness into which later Judaism stiffened, he could see in such a king, heathen though he might be, "the righteous man from the East" (xli. 2), the ally of Israel as the true servant of the Lord (xli. 9), the shepherd of the Lord, performing all his pleasure (xliv. 28).† He does not shrink even from applying to him a yet higher name. The heathen Cyrus is the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed of the Lord (xlv. 1), the true representative and type, even as

* The analogy of Pharaoh, as having the same meaning (Ra = the Sun), is at least interesting. The fact that such a name should, in the case of the historical Cyrus, supersede for foreigners like the Greeks and Jews the name (Agradates) which the ruler had previously borne, has its exact counterpart in the looseness with which Pharaoh is used as the proper name of Egyptian kings by the earlier Jewish historians. The view here taken of the occurrence of this name in Isaiah's prophecies is that maintained by Hävernick, "Introduction to Old Testament," ii. 2; by Hengstenberg, "Christology of the Old Testament," ii. 192 (Mayer's translation in Clark's "Foreign Theological Library"). The English reader may find it well stated, though not accepted, in Sir Edward Strachey's very interesting volume, "Hebrew Politics in the Times of Sargon and Sennacherib." Gesenius also (Lexicon) gives this as the meaning of the word. The fact of the change of name was well known in the time of Herodotus (i. 114). The previous name Agradates is given by Strabo (xv. 3). The fact that the grandfather of Cyrus is said by Herodotus (i. 111) to have borne the same name makes it all the more probable that it was titular, and, at all events, accounts for its being known to Isaiah in connection with Elam or Persia.

† So in like manner Jeremiah does not hesitate to speak of the Chaldean Nebuchadnezzar as "the servant of the Lord," xxv. 9; xxvii. 6.

David and Solomon had been, of the greater anointed One. With the thought of such a leader present to his mind he sees the downfall of Babylon with a new distinctness (xlvi. 1—9), and in spirit hears the couriers as they travel through the desert, not only as before, crying out, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (xxi. 9), but with fuller joy—

"Go ye forth of Babylon,
Flee ye from the Chaldeans,
With a voice of singing declare ye,
Tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth;
Say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob."
xlvi. 20.

It was well for the prophet that he had this glorious vision in the far horizon. The immediate prospect, the actual surroundings of his life, were dark and dreary enough. Of the two parties that had been struggling for mastery under Hezekiah,—one following the king and the prophet in their zeal for Jehovah, the other courting foreign alliances and favouring foreign idolatries,—the latter had got the young king into its hands, and he threw himself into its policy with a fanaticism which has no parallel but in the history of the Zidonian queen of Israel. The sins of Ahaz were revived. The ritual of Assyria and Chaldaea, especially in its astrological and thaumaturgic forms, superseded the worship of the temple. Foul symbols of a yet fouler worship appeared in the holy place. Women wove hangings, probably, *i.e.*, wreaths or garlands for the "Grove" and its orgies, and men gave themselves up to yet darker abominations. Sabbaths and Sabbatical years were alike neglected. The adherents of the old *régime* kept up for the most part the form without the life. A few faithful ones among the inner circle of the late

king's household still remained. As they died out it was but too evident that yet darker days were close at hand.*

Such is the picture, traced in outline, of the opening years of the reign of Manasseh. It remains for us to see whether the second volume (as we have called it) of Isaiah's prophecies fits into it and throws light on it. Our first illustration, however, must be taken from the preface to the earlier collection of his writings, written, we may well believe, like most other prefaces, after the latest of them, and therefore belonging to nearly the same period as the second.

Could the evils which have been spoken of be indicated more clearly than in the words which there meet us?

(1) Manasseh's youth made him a mere tool in the hands of others, probably of the queen-mother.

"As for my people, *children are their oppressors,*
And women rule over them." iii. 4, 12.

"The *child* shall behave himself proudly against the ancient,
And the *base* against the honourable." iii. 5.

(2) There are the two concurrent evils, coexisting then to a degree to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in either earlier or later periods, of a hypocritical formalism, the poor residuum of Hezekiah's reformation, and an open, shameless adoption of heathen usages; and the language of the prophet, in the earlier and later volumes, is pitched in the same note as regards both of them.

"Your new moons and your appointed Sabbaths my soul hateth:
They are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes
from you;

Yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear."

i. 13, 14.

* I must again refer to the article on "Manasseh," in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

"Behold, ye fast for strife and debate,
And to smite with the fist of wickedness:

Is it such a fast that I have chosen?
A day for a man to afflict his soul?
Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush,
And to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
Wilt thou call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the Lord?" lviii. 4, 5.

This was one side of the picture. On the other was an abject imitation of Chaldean soothsaying, against which the prophet bears his protest:—

"They are soothsayers like the Philistines.
Their land also is full of idols." ii. 6, 8.

"Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer,
That frustrateth the tokens of the liars,
And maketh diviners mad;
That turneth wise men backward,
And maketh their knowledge foolish." xlv. 25.

"But ye are they that forsake the Lord,
That forget my holy mountain,
That prepare a table for that Troop,
And offer a drink-offering unto that Number."* lrv. 11.

The reign of Hezekiah, honoured by surrounding nations, and zealous for Jehovah, had been distinguished—as that of Solomon was before, and that of Josiah afterwards—by a large accession of proselytes of alien birth; and their attachment to their new faith was stronger than that of many Israelites. They were faithful, while others swam with the stream of evil. Among these were some officers of the king's hârem, who, like Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian eunuch, in the reign of Zedekiah (Jer. xxxviii. 7), were conspicuous for their steadfastness.† For

* The words *Gad* and *Mem*, thus rendered in the English version, are probably names of the planets now known as Jupiter and Saturn, the givers of good or evil fortune.

† It is, I think, at least probable that we may see in Eliakim, of whom such glorious praise is spoken in 2 Kings xviii. 20—25, one of this class. He is described as being "over the house" (2 Kings

both such classes the prophet, rising above all national and traditional feeling, has words of the fullest sympathy.

"Neither let the *son of the stranger*, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying,
 'The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people :'
 Neither let the *eunuch* say,
 'Behold, I am a dry tree.'
 For thus saith the Lord *unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths*,
 And choose the things that please me,
 And take hold of my covenant ;
 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls
 A place and a name better than of sons and of daughters :
 I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."
 lvi. 3—5.

Idolatry was becoming darker and more cruel.
 Moloch worship was revived (2 Kings xvi. 3, 4).

"They shall be ashamed of *the oaks* which ye have desired,
 And ye shall be confounded for *the gardens* that ye have
 chosen."
 i. 29.

"Against whom do ye sport yourselves,
 Inflaming yourselves with idols under *every green tree*,
 Slaying the children in the valleys in the cliffs of the rocks ?"
 lvii. 5.

As the prophet saw the men of his own generation falling asleep, he looked, half wistfully, at their end.

"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart :
 And *merciful men are taken away*,
 None considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

xviii. 18; Isa. xxxvi. 3), and is told that he shall one day succeed Shebna in the office of scribe (xviii. 21). Now, in the later history of the kingdom of Judah, as in other Eastern monarchies, the confidential officers over the king's household were, for the most part, as the case of Ebed-melech shows, eunuchs, and in the monuments of Assyria the beardless face of the scribe at once identifies him. On this hypothesis we get once again a striking coincidence between the earlier and later utterances. The man who has no hope of children of his own, to whom is promised "a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters" (lv. 5), is to have a "sure place" (xxii. 23), is to be "a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of Judah" (xxii. 22).

He shall enter into peace:
They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in their up-
rightness." lvii. 1, 2.

The sense of being left alone, the last witness for righteousness in an evil generation, mocked and taunted, was almost more than he could bear.

"Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil is accounted mad : *
And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.
And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor." lix. 16, 16.

The witness which he bore against the sins of nobles and priests and people exposed him to shame and contumely. He who had been the honoured counsellor of kings was treated as the vilest outcast.

"The Lord God hath opened mine ear,
And I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.
*I gave my back to the smiters,
And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair :
I hid not my face from shame and spitting."* l. 5, 6.

We know that the fanatic cruelty of Manasseh did not end here. He "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (2 Kings xxi. 16). Foremost among the victims of that persecution must have been the prophets who with Isaiah had bravely borne their testimony, "setting their faces as a flint," asking the question which the martyrs of truth have asked in all ages, in the same tones and with the same answer :—

"He is near that justifieth me;
Who will contend with me ?
Behold, the Lord God will help me;
Who is he that shall condemn me ?" l. 8, 9.

As one after another of that noble army was led

* The marginal rendering of the English version. Ewald's translation, "became rare," gives nearly as good a meaning, and is etymologically truer.

forth to die by all the strange tortures that Eastern cruelty could invent, we may well think of the prophet's mind as learning new lessons which nothing else could have so clearly taught him. His expectations of the coming Christ were coloured and modified by this new experience as they had been by former ones. If he had been led to pass from the weakness and cowardice of Ahaz to the thought of the great battle and the mighty Conqueror "whose name shall be called Wonderful" (ix. 5—7); if, in contrast with man's injustice, there had risen before him the vision of a righteous king, "the rod out of the stem of Jesse," upon whom should rest "the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding" (xi. 1—9); if the hopes of Hezekiah's youth had formed and fashioned his hopes of One greater than Hezekiah in the far future, as the Psalmist's hopes (Psalms xlv. and lxxii.) had had their historical starting-point in the glory of Solomon, it might well be that the Divine education through which the eternal Spirit was leading him made the latter end of his life as fruitful as the beginning, and gave him yet deeper insight into the mysteries of God. So it was that he learnt to see that as he and his fellow-prophets were made perfect by suffering, as *they* found that the road to the fullest victory and the most perfect blessedness was through pain and sorrow, there must be a like discipline, a like pathway to the throne for Him, the greater Prophet, the redeeming King. Through what he saw and felt in the reign of Manasseh he was taught to think of the Christ that was to come as one "whose visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (lii. 14), growing up "as a tender

plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," with "no form nor comeliness" (liii. 2). What had been true in part of those who were now bearing his reproach, suffering for sins not their own, should be true in its completeness of Him.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows :
Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities." liii. 4, 5.

The patient, silent suffering of the martyr-prophets presented the type of the higher, more wonderful silence—

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
Yet he opened not his mouth :
He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
So opened he not his mouth." liii. 7.

It may at first seem strange that the volume which contains such notes of woe, pitched as it were in the sad *minor* of a plaintive sorrow, should open as this opens with such exulting consolation, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" (xl. 1). It may be that we shall never know the full meaning of each separate portion of this prophecy, or the reasons of its change from joy to sorrow, and back again to joy. To do that we ought to be able to connect each section with the events of the prophet's life, and the thoughts which were working in his heart, and these we have no *data* to decide on, and can but suggest more or less probable conjectures. Thus much, however, may be said, that the contrast between the gloom and the brightness had been the same throughout. Out of the disasters and defeat and guilt of Ahaz rose the wonderful prophecies of chapters ix. and xi. and xxv. Was it strange,

if he had been sustained in the midst of suffering, foreseeing the captivity of his people, by the thought of their restoration, that he should begin now with words which would give to others the same help and comfort with which he himself had been comforted of God? Was it not in harmony with all his previous history that the strength of the consolation should be proportionate to the depth of the distress, that through the thickest night there should pierce the rays of the far-off golden dawn?

Other points indicating at once a continuity of thought such as was natural in the writings of the same man, and the influence as natural of new circumstances, can only, within the limits of the present paper, be touched on sparingly. The instances given will, however, be enough to show that there is no difficulty in tracing the same man in the two volumes of the prophecies that bear his name, and may help others to continue the comparison for themselves.

(1.) Among the influences which were at work on the mind of Isaiah in his earlier life, a very high place must be assigned to the writings of Micah the Morasthite. Living at the same time, witnessing the same evils, we find the seer of Moresheth uttering noble words which the more conspicuous adviser of Hezekiah took up and repeated. It would almost seem as if the one prophet, living not in the capital city, but in an obscure village, speaking, not in the lofty language of Isaiah's poetry, but in half-humorous allusions to the names of the towns of Judah (i. 10—16), and in imagery drawn from the scenery and occupations of shepherd life, had been to the other as one who suggests thoughts after-

wards to be developed, and sets an example of courage in denouncing evil afterwards to be followed. The bold words of Micah in the days of Hezekiah, which a hundred years afterwards were appealed to as a precedent (Jer. xxvi. 18), may well be thought of as influencing the thoughts and teaching of Isaiah. Certain it is that the parallelisms between them are more numerous and striking than between any other two writers in the Old or New Testament. The first great vision of a better time in Isaiah ii. 2—4:—

"It shall come to pass in the last days,
That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in
the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall
flow unto it.
And many people shall go and say,
Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the
house of the God of Jacob;
And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his
paths:
For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the
Lord from Jerusalem.
And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many
people:
And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their
spears into pruninghooks:
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall
they learn war any more"—

is a verbal reproduction of what had been spoken by Micah iv. 1—3. Other instances of a like connection are as follows:—

"Behold, *the Lord cometh out of his place* to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity."—Isa. xxvi. 21.

"Behold, the Lord *cometh out of his place*, and will come down." Mic. i. 3.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he

"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what

goats Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Isa. i. 11, 16, 17.

In their outward mode of teaching, in the strange portentous disregard of conventional order, the one prophet reproduced the acted symbolism of the other:—

"At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking *naked and barefoot*."—Isa. xx. 2.

"Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go *stripped and naked*."—Mic. i. 8.

Both bear their testimony against the same evils in all but the same words:—

"Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts and *followeth after rewards*."—Isa. i. 23.

"The heads thereof *judge for reward*, and the priests thereof teach for hire."—Mic. iii. 11.

Both look to the house of David as the stock from which the deliverer shall come:—

"There shall come forth a *rod out of the stem of Jesse*, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."—Isa. xi. 1.

"But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah . . . out of thee shall *come forth* unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."—Mic. v. 2.

Materials for a sufficient induction have been given as to the connection between the Prophecy of Micah and the chaps. i.—xxxix. of Isaiah. Can we trace any like connection with the remaining chaps. xl.—lxvi.? The following passages give the answer:—

"Behold, I will make thee a *new sharp threshing instrument having teeth*: thou shalt *thresh* the mountains, and beat them small."—Isa. xlii. 15.

"Arise and *thresh*, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thee *horn iron*, and I will make thee *hoofs brass*."—Mic. iv. 13.

"The *righteous perisheth*, and no man layeth it to heart."

Isa. lvii. 1.

"And *dust shall be the serpent's meat*."—Isa. lxxv. 25.

"His watchmen are blind. . . . They are *greedy dogs* which can never have enough. . . . Come ye, say they, *I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink*."

Isa. lvi. 10—12.

"The *good man is perished out of the earth*: and there is none upright among men."

Mic. vii. 2.

"They shall *lick the dust like a serpent*."—Mic. vii. 17.

"If a man . . . do lie, saying, *I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink*; he shall even be the prophet of this people."—Mic. ii. 11.

"Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err . . . and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him."

Mic. iii. 5.

Hardly less interesting is it to notice the re-appearance, in the later book, of the thoughts, imagery, and even language of the earlier, just as the old man might be supposed to dwell on the intenser thoughts which he had cherished in his youth:—

"Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears."—Isa. xliii. 8.

"Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

Isa. xliii. 13.

"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."—Isa. xlv. 3.

"Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."—Isa. xlv. 15.

"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."

Isa. vi. 9.

"For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"—Isa. xiv. 27.

"And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes."

Isa. xxxv. 7.

"And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him."—Isa. viii. 17.

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Isa. li. 11.

"Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks."—Isa. lvii. 5.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."—Isa. lxv. 25.

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. xxxv. 10.

"For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen."—Isa. i. 29.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. xi. 6, 7, 9.

The list might be enlarged indefinitely, but these are sufficient for our present purpose. One instance only may be added as obscured by the mistranslation of the received English version.

It will be a familiar fact to most students of Scripture that at one period in the history of Hebrew literature the word *Rahab*, signifying "the proud, the haughty," makes its appearance as a poetical synonyme for Egypt. Thus in Psalm lxxxvii. 4, 5, belonging probably to this period, and describing the admission of proselytes from many countries, we find Egypt mentioned. "I will think upon Rahab and Babylon, with them that know me."* In what

* Comp. p. 169. I cannot refrain from noticing the singular agreement of this with Isa. xix. 24. "In that day shall Israel be

we have called Isaiah's second volume, the name occurs with the same signification :—

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord ;
Awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.
Art not thou it that hath cut Rahab (sc. *the haughty one*), and
wounded the dragon ?" il. 9.

But, in the first forty chapters as we read them in the Authorised Version we do not find it. In the Hebrew, however, it meets us in a very remarkable, often quoted passage. This, in English, stands thus—

"The Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose,
Therefore I have cried concerning this,
'Their strength is to sit still.'"

But the true rendering, in the judgment of nearly all critics, would be this :—

"Therefore I have cried concerning her,
She is Rahab sitting still "

(haughty, *i.e.*, and impotent).

The self-same characteristic word, with the characteristic play upon the etymology, is thus seen to recur in both volumes of the prophecy.*

The object which I have chiefly aimed at in this paper has been to make the later prophecies more intelligible and more interesting by connecting them with the life and feelings of a living man. They are not Sibylline oracles, devoid of all impress of

third with Egypt and Assyria." Was the prophet, or some contemporary of his, the writer of the psalm, rejoicing that in his own time, or in the time to come, natives of both these countries, and even of Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia, should be counted among the citizens of Zion, "when the Lord writeth up the people?"

* I am anxious to acknowledge my obligations to the writer of "A Plea for a new English Version of the Scriptures, by a Licentiate of the Church of Scotland" (Macmillans), for having recalled this fact to my remembrance, and so suggested the argument which rests upon it."

human character, but are, as the utterances of a true prophet should be, full of it to overflowing. But it would be idle to conceal that another end besides this has been kept in view. It is well known to all scholars—it can scarcely be unknown to many readers of this volume—that the chapters which have furnished the materials for this picture of the *old age of Isaiah* have by very many critics, English as well as foreign, been assigned to a different and later writer. The opening words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” have thus with many lost their old divine power. They have come to be associated with the discomfort of perplexity and controversy. Instead of seeing, in the whole prophecy which they usher in, the completion of the divine education which had up to that time led the prophet to ever new heights of spiritual insight and more glorious visions of the future, men have been taught to ascribe them to some “great unknown,” to a *pseudo*—or, where men shrank from that epithet, to a *deutero*—Isaiah. I have no desire to charge all such critics with irreverence or unbelief. Inquiries whether the books which we find in the Old or New Testament were written altogether by the writers whose names are affixed to them cannot be excluded as lying outside the province of legitimate criticism. The titles and superscriptions given to books, and, in many cases, the assignment of this or that book to an individual writer, were the work of later compilers, and cannot be thought of in any case as necessarily belonging to words originating in inspiration. In this case, however, I believe there is no sufficient ground for rejecting the received belief. The difficulties con-

nected with it, though at first sight they may appear formidable, are not so great as those which attend the rival hypothesis. Into those difficulties it is not my intention within these limits to enter at any length. That which has been relied on as decisive, the occurrence of the individual name of Cyrus, as the future king of Persia, has been already met by anticipation. Another, and, I am compelled to admit, a more serious one, is found in lxiv. 10, 11 :—

“Thy holy cities are a wilderness ;
 Zion is a wilderness, Judah a desolation ;
 Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee,
 is burned up with fire,
 And all our pleasant things are laid waste.”

The first impression made by such words is, of course, that they refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple as already completed. The man who wrote them, we say, must have seen the desolation of which he speaks. But here again the close connection which we have seen between the book of Isaiah and his contemporary Micah supplies the answer. The selfsame calamities of which the former speaks had been foretold by the latter in words which no one has thought of questioning as a prophecy after the event.

“Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field,
 And Jerusalem shall become heaps,
 And the mountain of the house (sc. of the Temple) as the high
places of the forest.” Micah iii. 12.

Assume these words to have been known to Isaiah, remember that he, here also following Micah (iv. 10), had a clear view of the coming exile in Babylon, remember that he already saw the sanctuary profaned by the foul image which Manasseh had set up (2 Chron. xxxiii. 2) and the Assyrian

armies ready to revenge, as they afterwards did revenge, the disastrous retreat of Sennacherib (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), and we shall hardly wonder that the desolation should seem to his prophetic vision as actually present, the long-delayed judgment as already executed. The fact that Josiah on his accession found the Temple in a condition altogether ruinous, and that this state was owing in part to a work of deliberate destruction at the hands of the kings of Judah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 10, 11), may well make it probable that he actually saw, in part at least, what he here describes.

We may ask, on the other hand, at what period towards the close of the Captivity would the mind of a later writer have turned to so disastrous a marriage, and so ill-omened a name as that of Hephzibah, as suggestive of hope and gladness? What is there in the books that tell us of the return of the exiles after Cyrus had appeared, to lead us to think of them as presenting in strange combination, the formal hypocrisy of a surface religion and a wild craving after all forms of magical idolatry? Was Moloch worship with its infant sacrifices a pressing danger then? Was it likely, at a time when the rigour of the teachers and leaders of the people was setting them against any tolerance of mixed marriages (Ezra x. 2), or the presence among them of men of other races (Ezra iv. 3), that any unknown writer would have spoken as this writer speaks, of the welcome to be given to the "sons of the stranger?" Why at such a time, when deliverance was close at hand, should we have thought that the "righteous was taken away from the evil to come," and not rather have mourned for him as cut off from

his share in the restoration? Had there been such a man so full of Divine insight, so capable of guiding and teaching, after Cyrus had taken Babylon, is it likely that there would have been no record of his work in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, not even in Jewish tradition? Would it have been left to Haggai and Zechariah to strengthen and stir up the people? Would such a writer, assuming his existence, have been likely to come under the same influences, to reproduce the thoughts of the same prophet, to present the same images, allusions, play upon words and names, as the historical Isaiah?

Lastly, we may add that the very glory and beauty of the language which speaks of the return is against the notion of its having been written by a contemporary. Let us think what that return actually was, the poor remnant of 42,360 who represented what had been a great nation, their struggle with difficulties, disunion, want of means (Haggai i. 6, 11), the opposition of kings and princes (Ezra iv. 4, 5), the joy and praise mingling with weeping and lamentations (Ezra iii. 13), and we shall hardly think it likely that one who had that before him would have spoken so rapturously as this writer does.

"Break forth into joy,
Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem:
For the Lord hath comforted his people,
He hath redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the sight of all the
nations;
And all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our
God."
lii. 9, 10.

No! here as elsewhere, the prophet, beholding what was far off, was led to see things in brighter colours and in nobler forms than they actually ap-

peared in when the time of their historical fulfilment came. Like other prophets, he was "a man of desires." There came before his mind the vision of a Jerusalem, a city of peace, beautiful and heavenly, which no earthly Jerusalem ever did or ever can realise. The yearning of his soul was to be satisfied elsewhere. He looked for "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

On these grounds, therefore, I submit to the judgment of such students of Scripture as may care to look into them, that the hypothesis of a deutero-Isaiah, the charge of supposititious authorship, which has found favour with so many eminent critics, must be dismissed as not proven, as involving those who accept it in a labyrinth of difficulties and contradictions, as robbing one of the noblest books of the Old Testament of half its life and power. To separate that book from *the old age of Isaiah* is hardly less perilous a venture than that which separates the Pastoral Epistles from the old age of St. Paul, or the Second Epistle which bears his name from the old age of St. Peter.*

* I may refer to an admirable Essay on the Authorship of Isaiah xl.—lxvi. appended to Professor Leathes's "Boyle Lectures" for 1868.

THREE GENERATIONS OF JEWISH PATRIOTISM.

WHATEVER interest may attach to the lives of individual men who have played a conspicuous part in the drama of a nation's history, is in some strange way heightened when we are able to trace a continuity of principle and policy in the members of the same family. There is a kind of *atarism* in political history as well as in physical peculiarity. A given line of feeling and character becomes hereditary just as much as a given cast of features. So we follow in Roman history the ever-recurring arrogance and recklessness of the Claudian *gens*, the stainless courage of the Fabian, the sympathy with the *plebs* which distinguished the Valerian. So in our own history we recognise the great Whig houses of the Cavendishes, the Russells, the Howards, a succession which, though modified and broken by variations in individual character, is yet too marked to be overlooked. It is not the least element in the interest with which we watch the career of the younger Pitt that he was the son of Chatham. Such a succession, from the comparative scantiness of our records, is not often traceable except in the royal

house, in Jewish history. One instance belongs to the most interesting period of the monarchy, beginning in the reign of the most saintly king, and connected with the life of perhaps the greatest of the prophets, I now purpose to examine.

2. The reign of which I speak is that of Josiah and the history which we have to trace opens in a memorable eighteenth year. The king, who had ascended the throne at the age of eight, was still in the early years of manhood, and had entered on more active work of devout zeal than had been possible in his early years. The temple of Jehovah which had fallen into decay during the long idolatry of Manasseh, and had not been restored after his late repentance, was to be brought back to something of its old magnificence. And in this work the king's chief agent and counsellor was "SHAPHAN, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe." To him the king gave commandment that he should go to Hilkiyah the high priest, and urge that there should be no more delay. For some years past apparently, the people had brought their gifts, and the treasury was now full. It was time to apply the funds that had been so collected, and to engage "carpenters, and builders, and masons," to buy "timber and hewn stone to repair the house." It is noted as characteristic of the confidence which existed between the scribe and the priest, as men of like devotion and integrity, that there was no audit of the accounts. "There was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hands, because they dealt faithfully" (2 Kings xxii. 7).*

* It is interesting to note that when a previous king, Josiah, had been engaged in a like work of temple restoration, the scribe and

3. This incident would be enough to show that the position of SHAPHAN in the government of Judah must have been a very prominent one. Over and above his functions as scribe, drawing up the king's edicts, keeping the decrees of his predecessors, controlling the finances of the king, he was also, if one may use modern terms to express ancient facts, a Minister of Religion as well as a Secretary of State and a Chancellor of the Exchequer. A better analogy would be found, perhaps, in saying that the scribe of Judah was to the king as a vizier to a caliph. But the reign of Hezekiah had probably added other functions to the office, and made the scribe not only the custodian of the royal archives, but also the guardian of the sacred books. When "the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah," copied out the proverbs of Solomon, which had not previously formed part of the book that bears that name (Prov. xxv. 1), it is reasonable to assume that their work was done under the directions of the king's chief scribe. The long antagonism of Manasseh to the faith of Israel, and the persecution of the prophets, had doubtless, as the subsequent history shows, thrown this part of his office into abeyance, but it remained as ready to be revived whenever occasion called for it. And with this high official influence there was that of age also. At the time when he comes upon the scene, his son AHIKAM is in full activity, associated with him in his work. Such a man must have been almost paramount in

the high priest (the former is not named, the latter was Jehoiada) stood in precisely the same relation to each other. They "told the money that was found in the house of the Lord," and gave it, being told, "into the hands of them that did the work, and had the oversight of the house of the Lord" (2 Kings xii. 10). Then also there was no audit of the accounts.

authority during the long minority of Josiah; must have been to him as Jehoiada was to Joash, as Cranmer was to Edward VI.; must have done much to form and foster the zeal and devotion for which he was afterwards so conspicuous. It is probable enough that he too had inherited the principles for which he was thus conspicuous. At a very critical moment in the life of Jeremiah, when the princes of Judah defended him against the attacks of the priests and prophets, when as foremost among those princes we find the name of **AHIKAM**, the son of **SHAPHAN**, we read that they appealed to what had occurred in the reign of Hezekiah as a decisive precedent in favour of the "liberty of prophesying." Micah the Morasthite had then predicted that Zion should be ploughed as a field and Jerusalem become heaps, and yet neither Hezekiah nor all Judah had put him to death (Jer. xxvi. 18, 19). What more likely than that the precedent referred to was one of the traditions of the house to which Jeremiah's chief defender belonged, and that some ancestor of his had been among those on whom the words of Micah had made a deep and lasting impression?*

4. The work in which **SHAPHAN** and **Hilkiah** were engaged had a strange and unlooked-for episode. In the course of their work of restoration, secreted in some corner of the Temple, **Hilkiah** the priest found "a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses" (2 Kings xxii. 8; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14), and reported his discovery to **SHAPHAN**. It was obviously a new

* The presence of an Achbor or Abdon, the son of *Micah*, among the companions of **AHIKAM** and **SHAPHAN** in the events that followed the discovery of the law (2 Kings xxii. 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20), presents a coincidence too noticeable to be passed over in dealing with this hypothesis.

book to them. It contained terrible threats of the desolation which the sins of the people were drawing down on them. When the king heard its denunciations he rent his clothes. There seems scarcely room for doubt from this description of its contents that the book so called was that which we know under the title of Deuteronomy. It is scarcely probable that the whole law of Moses could have remained unknown to the high priest and the king's chief scribe. But the explanation of the strange discovery is to be found in the fact that the present arrangement of the books of Moses is probably of later date, that it may have existed before Ezra in detached portions, and become a complete whole, as the Pentateuch, after his revision. And it might well be, if this were so, that the Book of Deuteronomy (assuming it to be an ancient and true record of the words of Moses) had yet been treated as a supplement, and been comparatively little read—that the copies made of it had never been very numerous—that because it denounced idolatry in stronger language than any other portion of the law, it had been hunted out and destroyed under Manasseh—that some faithful priest or prophet had sought to save it from perishing utterly by concealing it in the dust of some dark corner of the desecrated sanctuary.*

* The predominant theory of German criticism, it is well known, assigns the book itself to the reign of Josiah, and to the authorship of Jeremiah, or Baruch, or Hilkiah. It comes before us on this hypothesis as being, more or less, of the nature of a "pious fraud" intended to stimulate the reforming zeal of the young king and his advisers. I am not disposed to meet the theory by the *a priori* objection that there can be no personated authorship in any canonical book, but there are passages in the Book of Deuteronomy which seem to me incompatible with the date thus assumed. Can we think it probable that a work written by a priest of Judah would have been so lavish in its language of praise and blessing on

5. The action that followed on these events is prominent in the history of the period. Hilkiah, SHAPHAN, and AHİKAM, with the son of Micah already referred to, and another servant of the king's, are sent to "inquire of the Lord concerning the words of the book," and they go to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, and commune with her, and she utters her twofold prediction. Because Josiah's heart has been "tender," and he has humbled himself before the Lord, "the evil shall not come in his days," but the city itself shall "become a desolation and a curse" (2 Kings xxii. 15—20). The words bore their fruit in the active, zealous reformation of which we have the history in 2 Kings xxiii. The words of "the book of the covenant" against idolaters, and workers with familiar spirits, and wizards were fulfilled to the very letter. We may trace in the name of Shallum, which Josiah gave to one of his sons (known also as Jehoahaz), the influence which Huldah, the wife of Shallum, exercised over the king's counsels, and the honour in which he held her. The fact that a son of Shallum, *i.e.*, probably, of Huldah herself, was called after Maaseiah, the governor of the city (Jer. xxxv. 4), shows how closely she was connected with the party of zealous reformers. We are concerned now with their bearing upon the history of the family of SHAPHAN and those connected with them; and the more closely we examine the history, the more links


the house of Ephraim, and this after that kingdom had been utterly destroyed (Deut. xxxiii. 13—17)? Can we believe that such stress would have been laid on the Urim and Thummim as the glory of the tribe of Levi, when there is no trace whatever of the use or existence of the Urim after the accession of Solomon (Deut. xxxiii. 8)?

do we find between them, and the prophet who was soon to be so conspicuous, Jeremiah of Anathoth.

(1) In close union with SHAPHAN in the work of restoring the Temple, we find the name of Maaseiah, the governor of the city (2 Chron. xxxiv. 8). In the historical books we hear nothing more of him, but by combining passages in the writings of Jeremiah (xxxvi. 4; li. 59) we find that the prophet's two chosen disciples, Seraiah, and his more conspicuous brother, Baruch, the son of Neriah, were his grandsons. (2) Jeremiah himself is described as the son of Hilkiah, and although there is a preponderance both of authority and evidence against identifying him with the high priest who was SHAPHAN's fellow-worker, the identity of name is, as in so many other instances, presumptive evidence of some near degree of consanguinity. (3) In the remarkable passage in Jeremiah's history in which, while the army of the Chaldeans was encompassing the city, he purchased the reversion (in Hebrew phrase, the redemption) of land which belonged to a near kinsman, in his faith that the land should one day be free again, and its fields cultivated and houses built in it, we note that the name of that kinsman was Hanameel, *the son of Shallum*, and that this Shallum was the prophet's uncle. If we identify him, and here there is nothing against the identification, with the husband of Huldah, we have a connection which throws a flood of light on the whole history. If this be left as simply conjectural, there still remains evidence of some kind of intimacy or relationship. (4) When Jeremiah writes by the hands of the two ambassadors who were sent to Babylon a letter exhorting the captive Jews to seek


the peace of the city in which they lived, instead of plunging into rash and profitless conspiracies, on of those whom he entrusted with this perilous commission was Gemariah, the son of Hilkihah, either *i.e.*, a brother of Jeremiah himself, or a son of the reforming high priest. In either case it is a noticeable fact, pointing to the close union of the two families, that he bears the same name as one of the sons of SHAPHAN, and is accompanied in his mission by another (Jer. xxix. 3).

6. The venerable head of the house passes from the scene, taken away from the evil to come, and leaves behind him four sons. Every one of them is more or less prominent in the history of the downfall of the kingdom. AHIKAM, as we have seen, was already in the full maturity of life, and high in the king's favour, at the time of the discovery of the book of the law by Hilkihah. He was one of those sent to Huldah. He must, in the nature of the case, have taken a leading part in the extirpation of idolatry which followed. Then came the rash opposition of Josiah, as a tributary ally of the Chaldeans, to the march of Pharaoh-nechoh, and his death at the battle of Megiddo; the short reign of Shallum, his deposition by the Egyptian king, the exile from which he was never to return (Jer. xxii. 10—12); the appointment of Jehoiakim as a satrap king, dependent on the power of Egypt. The reign of that king was the period in which Jeremiah, who seems to have first drawn men's eyes on him by his lamentations over Josiah's death, became active as a prophet. And as soon as we enter on the history of that activity coincidences that connect him with the house of SHAPHAN, or the party to which SHAPHAN



belonged, multiply on every side. (a) At the very commencement of Jehoiakim's reign, the prophet appeared in the courts of the Lord's house, whither the "word of the Lord" had bidden him go, and proclaimed in the hearing of all the crowd that worshipped there the awful message, that unless they repented and hearkened to the Lord, He would "make this house as Shiloh," would "make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." Priests, prophets, and people rise up against him with a fury which reminds of the rage with which the priests and scribes of a later date "gnashed their teeth" and rushed on Stephen. The princes of Judah are summoned by the unwonted stir from the palace to the Temple, and sit, as it were, in council "in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house." The priests and the prophets are clamorous for Jeremiah's condemnation: "This man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard." The prophet appeals from them to the calmer judgment of the princes, and repeats that in all that he said he had but uttered the words which the Lord had given him to utter. And the appeal is successful. The judgment of the court is more than an acquittal. His divine mission as a prophet is fully recognised. "This man is not worthy to die, for he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God." Certain of the elders of the land, encouraged by this support, refer to the precedent (already mentioned) of Micah the Morasthite in the reign of Hezekiah. And so, for the present, the prophet escapes. The closing words of the chapter explain the powerful protection which was thus given him: "Nevertheless the hand of AHIKAM, the son of

SHAPHAN, was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hands of the people to put him to death" (Jer. xxvi. 24). (b) In the memorable incident of the Rechabites, to whom Jeremiah offered wine, after he had brought them into the precincts of the Temple, we note that the room into which he brought them was over that of Maaseiah, the son of Shallum—possibly, *i.e.*, of the very governor of the city who acted with SHAPHAN, more probably of a son of the prophetess Huldah, who was named after him. The fact that the prophetess had a residence assigned to her in what is called the "college" or "school" within the precincts of the Temple, strengthens the inference in favour of the latter hypothesis (Jer. xxxv. 4; 2 Kings xxii. 14). (c) When the prophet "took the roll of a book," and wrote therein all the words which he had spoken against Israel and Judah and Jerusalem, and being imprisoned, sent Baruch to read it in the house of the Lord, the place chosen for the purpose was the chamber of GEMARIAH, the son of SHAPHAN the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house" ("the new gate," probably, *i.e.*, part of the building constructed under SHAPHAN's superintendence). Gemariah himself seems not to have been present, but one of the third generation, his son MICHAIAH, was left as his representative. He listened till the stern, terrible message had reached its close, and then hastened to report its substance to his father and the other princes (among them a son of the Achbor, who met us, as one of the colleagues of SHAPHAN, in the mission to Huldah) as they sat in council. They heard, and sent for Baruch, and made him repeat



the message, and listened to it with terror. They went to the king to inform him, but before they did so, they took measures for the safety of the prophet and his disciples, with whom they were obviously in sympathy. And then we have the strange scene which is brought before us with such a dramatic vividness. It was winter, and the king was in his winter palace, and a charcoal fire was burning on the hearth. As if half anticipating what actually took place, the princes of Judah had placed the written roll of the prophet, as well as the men who had written it, in a place of safety, and confine themselves to an oral report of its substance. But the king will have the very words, and nothing else, and sends Jehudi (apparently one of the royal pages) to fetch the roll from the chamber of Elishama the scribe, where it had been deposited. It is brought, and Jehudi reads it. The king listens with ill-disguised impatience, and after a little while (but three or four leaves had been read) burst out into an impotent rage against the parchment-roll, cuts it into strips with his penknife, and throws it leaf by leaf into the fire till the whole is burnt. Three of the princes made intercession with the king that he would not burn the roll; and among the three we find the name of GEMARIAH the son of SHAPHAN (Jer. xxxvi.).

7. There may have been one notable exception to the general faithfulness of the family. In the vision which came to Ezekiel by the banks of Chebar, he is taken "in the spirit" to Jerusalem, and has to look (this was in the reign of Zedekiah) into the secret recesses of the Temple. He looks, and beholds every form of "creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel,"

portrayed upon the wall round about. "And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood JAAZANIAH the son of SHAPHAN, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up" (Ezek. viii. 7—12). And this is followed by a like vision of "women weeping for Tammuz" at the north gate of the Temple, and of "five-and-twenty men at the door between the porch and the altar, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." Whether we think of the son of SHAPHAN, thus brought before us, as one of the same house who had apostatized, or take the coincidence of name as accidental, the evidence as to the religious state of Jerusalem during the reign of Zedekiah is distinct enough, and must be borne in mind as we trace the history of the house of SHAPHAN in the events that follow.


8. The reign of Jehoiakim lasted for eight years, and then the supremacy of Egypt was changed for that of the Chaldeans. Nebuchadnezzar reigned from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates. A weak attempt at rebellion did but irritate the great king; and when Jehoiakim died, and his son Jehoiachin (otherwise Jeconiah, or Coniah) was placed on the throne, the boy-king* had but a three-months' reign. The city was taken, the Temple plundered, the king deposed, and taken, with "all the mighty men of valour and all the princes," into exile. The captivity had begun. Zedekiah, a half-brother of

* In 2 Kings xxiv. 8, his age is given as eighteen; in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, with less probability, at eight.

Jehoiakim's, was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar as a tributary king. Among the captives there must probably have been some at least of the house of SHAPHAN, who were so conspicuous among the princes of Judah. All that follows leads to the conviction that they, or some of them, were in Babylon, entering into relations more or less confidential with the Chaldean king and his generals. This explains the contrast which Jeremiah draws (chap. xxiv.) between the good figs, which symbolize those who have been carried to Babylon, and the others, "evil, very evil," that answer to the king and his princes, and the "residue of the land" at home. This accounts for the prophet's sending a special letter by ELASAH the son of SHAPHAN, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, when they went as ambassadors from Zedekiah to Babylon, bidding them seek the peace of the city to which they had been carried captive (Jer. xxix. 3, 7). It is perhaps connected with that mysterious visit to the Euphrates, uncertain as to its date, and standing apparently so isolated, that many commentators have looked on it as done in vision only, of which we read in chap. xiii. 1—11. Lastly, it accounts for the far worse treatment of the prophet during the reign of Zedekiah, "shut up in the courts of the prison" (xxxii. 1; xxxiii. 1), with chains fettering his limbs (xl. 4), in the house of Jonathan the scribe, with its fetid dungeons and scant food endangering his life (xxxvii. 15—21), thrown down, after the king had shown a momentary pity, into the dungeon where "there was no water, but mire," where "he was like to perish for hunger," from which he had to be dragged up by ropes as from the

bottom of a well (Jer. xxxviii. 6—13). He had no longer a protector at the court of Zedekiah, none among the princes of Judah. The house of SHAPHAN, with the possible exception of the apostate Jaazaniah, were far away in the city on the banks of the Euphrates.

9. The supposition which has thus so much in its favour, accounts, lastly, for the manner in which the representative of the third generation appears on the scene, and for the care taken by the Chaldean generals at the command of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem is captured, to protect the person of the prophet. Their first act is to take him out of the court of the prison, and commit him to the safe keeping of GEDALIAH, the son of AHIKAM, the son of SHAPHAN. He, it is clear, has come with the invading army. Through him Nebuchadnezzar has heard of the line which the prophet has taken in deprecating resistance to what he looked on as a divine appointment. He comes as already appointed by the king of Babylon to be satrap over the conquered country. When the prophet, released from his imprisonment, has to choose between the invitation to go to Babylon or to remain with GEDALIAH, he naturally chooses the companionship of his early friend and protector—of one who, being comparatively young, would be likely to look on him with reverence. And we can scarcely fail to recognise in the reception which the new governor met with, a proof of the confidence inspired by his descent. They gather round him—princes and peasants—and receive his assurance of protection. Instead of the lawless plunder which was almost the normal accompaniment of an invasion, they are encouraged to



gather their wine and summer fruits and oil under a promise of security. They flock from all the neighbouring countries—from Moab and Ammon and Edom—in the belief that there is now some prospect of tranquillity and order. The character of GEDALIAH inspired them with hope. There is a touching generosity, a noble simplicity of trust, in the way in which he rejected the warning that was given him as to the treachery with which, under the guise of a loyal allegiance, he was surrounded. And with him and the prophet we find once more united, in principle and act, Baruch the son of Neriah. He too is obviously absent from Jerusalem during the whole reign of Zedekiah, neither sharing the prophet's sufferings nor able to relieve them: and, if so, the most probable conjecture is that he too had been carried off to Babylon, and had returned with Gedaliah. The apocryphal book which bears his name, though spurious, may reasonably be looked on as embodying facts which were then known; and it purports to have been written in Babylon, and read in the presence of Jechonias (Jehoiachin), on the very day of the destruction of Jerusalem, "when the nobles and the king's sons, and all the people from the highest to the lowest, were gathered at Babylon by the river Sud" (Baruch i. 1—4).

10. The warning which GEDALIAH had received was only too well grounded. When Johanan the son of Kareah told him that Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama,* sought his life,

* The names of Nethaniah and Elishama meet us as among the servants of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxxvi. 12, 14), but they are clearly not identical with Ishmael's father and grandfather. They may, however, as in other instances, be received as evidence of relationship, and so probably of inherited partizanship.

and offered to avert the deed by the assassination of the murderer himself, he had good reason for knowing that "Balis, the king of the Ammonites," had instigated the crime. Each of the sharers in the scheme had probably his own motives; and it is not difficult to guess them. (a) Ishmael was "of the seed-royal," and with him were ten men, "the princes of the king." As such, he and they might naturally feel aggrieved that instead of his being chosen, as Zedekiah had been, to remain as titular king of the ruined cities and impoverished population left by the Chaldæans, the work of ruling was given by Nebuchadnezzar to one whose fathers had been the king's servants, in whose veins there flowed no drop of royal blood. (b) And Balis, too, had his cause of quarrel against the prophet, and the prophet's friends. Jeremiah had proclaimed in the reign of Zedekiah* that the same yoke of bondage which was to come on Jerusalem would fall also upon the Ammonites. He had prophesied that "Rabbah should be a desolate heap, and that her daughters" (*i.e.*, daughter-towns) "should be burned with fire, that their king should go into captivity, and his princes and his priests together" (Jer. xlix. 1—6). At first it seemed as if they might hope to escape. The scourge fell on Jerusalem, and let them go free. They might have exulted, as Edom did, in the downfall of their rival, But when they saw the prophet once more free and active, able to assist in working out the fulfilment of his own predictions, they felt that the danger

* Ch. xxvii. 1, refers the prophecy to the reign of Jehoiakim, but vers. 3, 12, show that there must have been some error of transcription.

was pressing, and were ready to take any measures to avert it.

11. The history of the assassination may be very briefly told. Ishmael and his confederates came as on a friendly visit to GEDALIAH at Mizpah, and are received by him as guests to "eat bread." Mizpah, at the time, was probably a simple fortress, which served as the residence of the satrap and a few soldiers. The meal was clearly a private one, as if part of some secret conference, and the number of men in the fortress very small. Ishmael and his ten adherents rose up suddenly, when the wine-cup had done its work, against the unsuspecting GEDALIAH, and slew him, and this was followed by the massacre of his adherents. Two days passed before the news of the murder was known, and Ishmael took advantage of the secrecy to work another deed of bloodshed, which seems at first to have been one of mere wanton atrocity, but which may have had a political significance.

Eighty men were going from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, as pilgrims to the desolated temple. They had their beards shaven, their clothes rent: they had cut themselves after the heathen fashion in token of their sorrow, and now they were going "with offerings and incense in their hands" (Jer. xli. 1—10). Let us remember that these men must have been representatives of the remnant of Ephraim, of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, mingled to some extent with the foreign races which Esar-haddon had planted there. Let us remember with what tones of yearning and pity Jeremiah had turned to Ephraim, how he had dwelt on the sin of "treacherous" Judah

as greater than the sin of "backsliding" Israel (Jer. iii. 6—11); how he had dwelt on the hope that they would one day turn and repent, and had spoken, in the name of the Lord, of Ephraim as a "dear son," a "pleasant child," "earnestly remembered still," one on whom the Lord had sworn that He would have mercy (Jer. xxxi. 18—20). Bearing this in mind, we can well imagine that the pilgrimage in which these men were engaged had at once a religious and a political meaning. It declared that they returned to the religion and the church of their fathers, that they accepted the prophet as their guide, that they were willing to accept the prophet's friend as their ruler. In order to ensnare them Ishmael has to pretend that he comes to join their solemn litany with weeping and lamentations (Jer. xli. 6), and that he is sent to lead them into the presence of GEDALIAH. They fall into the trap, as though this were the very thing they came for, and the deed of blood is perpetrated.

12. I do not care to go further into the story of that crime. I am writing the history of a family, not of a period, and with the death of GEDALIAH the last member of the house of SHAPHAN, of whom we know anything, passes from our view. I note only in conclusion, that just as this inquiry into one of the by-paths of Jewish history has served to show us what influences surrounded the prophet Jeremiah's youth, and sustained him in the struggles of his manhood, and consoled him in his sorrowing age, so it may help us in some measure to estimate the bitterness of the closing years of his life, when he was left all but friendless and alone. Baruch, indeed, was still faithful in the midst of a stubborn and rebellious

house. But with that exception all were gone who had known and helped him. He was alone in the solitude of age and of a work seemingly resultless, sustained only by his trust in JEHOVAH OUR RIGHT-EOUSNESS, and his belief in the NEW COVENANT to be made some far-off day with the house of Israel and with mankind.

XII.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

PART I.—NEBUCHADNEZZAR.



THE seventy years of the Captivity were in many ways the most remarkable period of a history which throughout was wonderful. They drew a broad line of demarcation between the older and the later phases of the religion and the culture of the chosen people. The exile was at once the penalty of their past sins, and the education by which they were, in part at least, purified from them. This was what all their previous history had brought them to. This contained the germs of all their future. Whatever was most characteristic of later Judaism had its origin by the banks of the Euphrates. There the Scribes rose into prominence, as the Spirit that spake by the prophets came less frequently and with diminished power. There the canon of the Old Testament first assumed something of its present shape, and all else that had belonged to the literature of Israel was left, either by a deliberate process of selection and rejection, or by the chances of conquest and of exile, to perish and be forgotten. There the old forms of idolatry, which had cleaved to the life of the nation,

like a leprous taint, from the time of the Exodus, were laid aside never to be resumed. There the very language which they spoke assumed a different shape, and there, abandoning the written characters which their fathers had used, they learnt to use those which they have ever since employed with hardly any alteration, the characters which we know as Hebrew.*

A period so fruitful in results of the greatest moment might well claim a special investigation. That claim is strengthened when we remember the position which it occupies, not only in relation to the fortunes of the chosen people, but in the contemporary history of the world. It opens just after the overthrow of one of the great monarchies, and the destruction of one of the great cities, of the ancient world, which had kept its ground for upwards of a thousand years. It ends with the fall of one that in the colossal greatness of its power and the magnificence of its buildings surpassed all others. It begins with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and ends with that of Cyrus. It was a time of vast migrations, and struggles of races and of creeds. The religion of Buddha was working its mighty change in India, not altogether beyond the horizon of the Babylonian empire. The religion of Zoroaster was entering on a new and more energetic life, and the books which embody that faith were assuming their present shape. Not less wonderful was the synchronism of events in regions that lay then entirely out of all contact with the history of the Bible. Then it was that Epime-

* By one of the strange vicissitudes of history, the older Hebrew writing has been preserved to our own time in the Pentateuch MSS. of the Samaritans, whom the Jews despised as not being of the stock of Abraham.

nides, and the Orphic brotherhoods that traced their origin to him, were altering the character of the earlier creed of Greece, as represented by the Homeric poems, that Pythagoras and his disciples were laying the foundations of an asceticism which developed into a philosophy, that Solon was building up the intellectual and political life of Athens. In the far West, Rome was already rising into greatness. The walls of Servius Tullus, yet more the organization of the constitution which bears his name, were marking out the future destiny of the city of the Seven Hills as different from that of any other town in Italy. In the far East, Confucius was entering on his work as the teacher of an ethical system which, whatever may be its defects, has kept its ground through all the centuries that have followed, and been accepted by many millions of mankind, which, at present, modified more or less by its contact with Buddhism divides with that system the homage of nearly all tribes and nations of Turanian origin.

Of many of these great changes we can only think with wonder at the strange parallelism with which the great divisions of the human family were moving on, far removed from each other, in the order which had been appointed for them. Those which connect themselves directly with the rise and fall of the great Chaldean monarchy will serve to show how, "in sundry times and divers manners," God has taught men to feel after Him, and, it may be, find Him. They will throw a new light on many passages of Scripture. Here, as in so many other regions of history, we, at the distance of two thousand five hundred years, are better qualified to judge and to interpret than those who were removed from the

events of which they spoke by two or three short centuries. The researches of the scholars of our own time have compelled the records of Assyrian, Chaldean, and Persian monuments, which were before as a sealed book, to give up their treasures, and we are now able to fill up the gaps in the fragmentary notices of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to correct or complete the narratives, often hazy and legendary, of the Greek historians.

For centuries before the birth of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon had been carrying on with varying success a struggle against the great Assyrian empire which had its capital on the Tigris. For the most part it was governed by an Assyrian satrap. Sometimes the satrap tried to assert his independence. In the eighth century B.C. the first great blow was struck at the power of Nineveh. The Pul who appears in 2 Kings xv. 19; 1 Chron. v. 26, as a king of Assyria, was in reality a Babylonian ruler, who, in conjunction with a Median chief, attacked a king whom the Greeks called Sardanapalus, and, on his defeat and death, B.C. 788, took his throne and title.* This brought him into contact with the kingdom of Israel, which, from the days of Jehu, had paid tribute to the Assyrian king,† and which some thirty or forty years before had seen its chief prophet start on a journey to the great city, in which he appeared as a

* In the Greek narratives the Babylonian king appears as Belesis, the Median as Arbaces. Sardanapalus (on the Assyrian monuments the name appears as Assourlikhous) is the monarch whose effeminacy and luxury have become proverbial. When the capture of Nineveh was inevitable he set fire to his palace, and perished in its ruins with his concubines and eunuchs.

† "Jehu, the son of *Khumri*," on the monuments. The latter name is identical with the "Omri" of the Bible, and shows that the king of Israel was looked upon as continuing the dynasty of the house of Ahab, which he had in fact overthrown.

preacher of repentance, warning it of its coming destruction. A thousand talents of silver had to be paid by Menahem, who then filled the throne of Israel, as a tribute (2 Kings xv. 19, 20). If we identify the Tiphseh, which that king is said to have taken (2 Kings xv. 14), with the city of the same name founded by Solomon on the banks of the Euphrates, we are led to the conclusion that he too had taken advantage of the weakness of the Assyrian king, and had endeavoured to regain possession of what had once belonged to Israel, and that the invasion was to chastise him for this presumption. An incidental notice shows (1 Chron. v. 26) that Pul was the first to begin the system of deportation which was afterwards carried on so ruthlessly. The tribes on the east of the Jordan suffered most severely. They were already made to taste the bitterness of exile.

The hour of the downfall of Nineveh had not, however, as yet arrived. The next king, Tiglath-Pileser, was of the old Assyrian stock. The Chaldeans were driven back, and compelled to content themselves with maintaining their independence in the province of Babylon. The successor of Pul, Nabonassar stamped his name on a chronological era which served as a starting-point for the later annalists of Eastern history, and burnt the records of all the alien kings who had ruled before him, but did little else. Then followed a time of weakness and disorder. The Assyrian kings, under Salmaneser and Sargon (Isa. xx.1), raised their kingdom to its former height of power. The kings of Israel struggled in vain against it, in vain sought to strengthen themselves by an alliance with the Ethiopian dynasty

then ruling in Egypt.* They, too, were conquered and carried to Halah, and Habor, and the cities of the Medes. After an interval of eight years, and a fruitless attempt to avert the danger by submission and the payment of tribute, the armies of Sennacherib took the cities of Judah, and encompassed Jerusalem itself. The city was blockaded, and threatened with the horrors of famine. It escaped only by the sudden pestilence which in a single night wrecked the hopes of the Assyrian king, and made him retire to his own country, there to perish by the hands of his own sons. The singularly interesting history of Isaiah xxxix. throws light on the position which Babylon occupied at this juncture, and the way in which it was affected by the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Merôdach-Baladan, the king who is there named, had carried on a long struggle against him and his predecessor, Sargon. When he heard of the marvellous deliverance which had thus been granted to Hezekiah, and of what must have seemed hardly less strikingly a proof of his being under the protection of a divine power, his escape as from the jaws of death, (possibly from the self-same plague which had proved so fatal to the invaders), it seemed to him that here was an ally whose support would be invaluable. He sent his ambassadors with the gifts which, according to Oriental usage, had the character of tribute as from a subject prince. He was willing to acknowledge Hezekiah as his titular sovereign. The king of Judah, blinded by the dream of being the head of a re-united monarchy, reviving the old glories of David and Solomon, and

* The Ethiopian king appears in Herodotus under the name of Sabaco. In 2 Kings xvii. 4, it is contracted into So.

extending his power, as Menahem had tried to do once more to the banks of the Euphrates, fell into the snare.* The voice of the prophet, who saw more clearly into the perils which such an alliance was sure to bring with it, compelled him to put aside that thought. The prospect of an alliance between Babylon and Judah proved abortive; and Esar-haddon, successor of Sennacherib, first as viceroy during his father's lifetime, and then as king, made Babylon at times the seat of government, in order more completely to ensure the subjugation of the rebellious province. It was there that Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, who seems to have plunged rashly into the policy against which Isaiah had protested, was carried as a prisoner by Esar-haddon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11). It was from Babylon that the same king sent the Cuthites and other tribes, who were to replace the Israelites that had been carried away from the northern provinces of Palestine, and who became the ancestors of the Samaritans of later history (2 Kings xvii. 24; Ezra iv. 2). For the next ninety years the two great cities of the East continued, with but slight interruptions, on the same footing. They were so when, circ. B.C. 626, Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, became the satrap of Babylon under the last but one of the Assyrian kings.

The attack on Nineveh began, as before, by an

* The summons addressed by the king in the earlier years of his reign to the chief tribes of the northern kingdom, Ephraim, Manasseh, Asher, Issachar, and Zebulun, shows that Hezekiah had started with the hope of restoring the monarchy to its old greatness. The name which, towards its close, he gave his son (Manasseh) may fairly be regarded as evidence that that hope had not been abandoned. The overthrow of Sennacherib's army had naturally tended to revive it.

alliance between the Babylonian and the Median kings, and the marriage of the daughter of Cyaxares with Nebuchadnezzar was the seal of the compact into which they entered to complete the work that had been commenced by Pul and Arbaces. The great migration of the Turanian tribes, Scythians, Cimmerii, Massagetæ, which led the hordes that were grouped under the first name to pour down like a flood upon the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates, over the provinces of Asia Minor, and finally over the lower valley of the Danube, imposed on the two confederates, especially on the Median kings, the task of defending their own kingdoms, and so for a time the doom of Nineveh was delayed. In the meantime, Nabopolassar and his queen Nitocris (the name indicates an Egyptian origin,* and points probably to an alliance with the Ethiopian dynasty, then reigning at Sais), went on with the great engineering works which made Babylon the wonder of the world. Canals were dug which shortened the voyage from one point of the winding course of the Euphrates to another, embankments constructed to check the inundations of the river, a large lake made to receive its waters when they overflowed, a bridge thrown across the stream, hanging or terraced gardens laid out, it was said, to remind the Median wife of Nebuchadnezzar of the scenery of her own land. Gradually, without venturing as yet on the final attack, he absorbed one after another the chief provinces of the Assyrian empire, and left its king Assaracus little more than Nineveh and its adjacent territory.

* The first syllable is identical with the name of the goddess NEITH.

At this stage we get a point of contact with the history of the Bible. Egypt under Psammitichus seemed to have entered on a new stage of greatness, and its king sought to regain the power which his predecessors, Rameses and Sesostris, had exercised over Syria, and the other western provinces of Asia. The policy of Manasseh led him to court the alliance of a sovereign who seemed strong enough to defend him against the Assyrian king. Jews were sent as auxiliaries to defend the Ethiopian frontiers on the upper valley of the Nile.* The name of Manasseh's son, Amon, had a suspiciously Egyptian sound.† As far as Manasseh himself was concerned, the alliance ended, as the prophets had foretold it would do, in shame and defeat. He was carried as a prisoner by the Assyrian king to Babylon; and when he returned, it was as a subject-king tributary to him, not as the ally of the king of Egypt. It is in this relation that we have to seek the explanation of the seeming rashness which led to the defeat and death of the good king Josiah at the battle of Megiddo. Necho, the son of Psammitichus, was watching the gradual break-up of the Assyrian empire, and sought to come in for some share of the spoils of the "sick man," whose death seemed so close at hand. With this view he marched his armies into Palestine as the high road to the valley of the Euphrates. Josiah, possibly, as loyal to his alliance with the Assyrian king, possibly, as asserting

* The fact is stated in the narrative of the pseudo-Aristeas as to the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. It is probably referred to in the words in which Zephaniah speaks (iii. 10) of the "suppliants," the "dispersed," who, when he wrote, were "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia."

† Comp the article "Manasseh" in the "Dictionary of the Bible."

his neutrality, and resenting the use which Necho had made of his territory as an attack on his independence, but possibly also, as wishing to see the work in which Nabopolassar was engaged carried on to its completion without interruption, led his troops in person to stop the Pharaoh's progress. Necho's professions of friendliness were in vain. In vain also was the warning which the Biblical historian recognises as sent from God through the lips of the Egyptian king (2 Chron. xxxv. 20). The battle was fought in the plain of Esdraelon, and the king was slain. The conqueror pressed on to Carchemish on the Euphrates, and so gained a position of immense importance in his attack on either or both of the Mesopotamian monarchies. On his return within a few months, he deposed the king whom the people at Jerusalem had set up, Shallum or Jehoahaz, and, carrying him into Egypt, appointed another of Josiah's sons, Jehoiakim, to reign as a subject-ally.

In the following year, B.C. 607, Nabopolassar associated his son with him as a sharer in the kingly power and title, left to him the task of watching and checking the progress of the Egyptian conqueror, and gave himself to the long-delayed work of the final attack on Nineveh. Assaracus, the last sovereign of the mighty empire, reproducing, as he did, the weakness of the Sardanapalus under whom Nineveh had been taken before, offered but a feeble resistance. The words of Jonah were at last fulfilled. The ten tribes, who dwelt in the cities of the Medes, or by the Tigris and its tributaries, and who had cherished the predictions of that prophet in their memory, saw with exultation the downfall

of the city to which they owed their exile from the land of their fathers.* The woe which Nahum—himself, probably, one of the exiles—had pronounced upon the “bloody city,” was wrought out to the uttermost. She was left “empty, and waste, and void,” and there was “no healing of that bruise.”

The strength which this victory gave to the Chaldean monarchy enabled Nebuchadnezzar to renew the struggle against the Egyptian king with greater hope of success, and Carchemish, which had before been the scene of Necho's victory, now witnessed the entire overthrow of his army. The great host that “came up as a flood, whose waves were moved as the rivers,” with its chariots and horses, its Ethiopians and Libyans, its heavy-armed troops, and its Lydian archers,† became, as Jeremiah had foretold (chap. xlv.), a “sacrifice to the Lord God of hosts in the north country, by the river Euphrates.” Nebuchadnezzar, after the battle, drove the defeated army before him to the borders of Egypt. He was at Pelusium when he heard of his father's death, and returned to Babylon to take possession of the throne.

On his way southward, or on his return (it is not certain which), he halted at Jerusalem. There he found Jehoiakim, the vassal king, the tributary of Egypt. He met, however, with no effectual resistance. The city was taken. The allegiance and the

* Comp. the language of the Book of Tobit, xiv. 15.

† It is doubtful whether these Ludim (to give the Hebrew form of the name) were an African or Asiatic tribe. In favour of identifying them with the Lydians of Greek history, we have the fact that Psammitichus had begun the practice of engaging Greek mercenaries, and that Ionians and Carians might naturally be grouped together by a Jewish writer of this period under the generic name of the most powerful race of Western Asia.

tribute were transferred. There was a Chaldaean party within the walls of the holy city,—the party of those who had been the friends and counsellors of Josiah, and had lamented over his death, and who saw less danger in that dependence upon a distant power, than in a close alliance with a people from whom the Israelites had so often caught the taint of idolatry, and who had proved themselves so treacherous and unfaithful. And at the head of this party was Jeremiah, the prophet of Anathoth. It is clear that he saw from the first that Nebuchadnezzar was the appointed scourge of God for the chastisement of the nations; that his own people needed, and would receive, the discipline of that chastisement. So, as soon as Nebuchadnezzar had entered on his reign as joint ruler with his father, he had warned the people of the seventy years' captivity that lay before them. So, in vision, he took the "cup of the Lord's fury" (xxv. 15), and made all the nations to drink thereof. Pharaoh and the Philistines, Edom and Moab and Ammon, Tyre and Zidon, Dedan and Arabia, Media and Persia, all were in their turn to drink of that cup, and then (this time the name hidden beneath the secret cipher of an inverted alphabet*) the king of Sheshach—*i.e.*, the king of Babylon himself—was to drink after them.

There seems little room for doubt that the prophet and his friends must have become at this time personally known, and known as friends and partizans, to the Chaldaean king and his generals. It was probably owing to their influence that the king,

* The letters would correspond as follows: { She. Sha. Ch.
Ba. Be. L.

who had been taken prisoner, was not carried off to Babylon with the other captives, as had been the intention of the conqueror, but was for a time replaced upon the throne. But the captivity had already begun. Though Jehoiakim himself was spared, yet four at least of the princes of the house of David were carried off to be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon, and among them were those whose names are so familiar to us,—Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Azariah and Misael. With them, too, were the remnant of the strange Kenite people, half-sect, half-tribe whom we know as the Rechabites, who had been driven to take refuge in Jerusalem by the approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and who were the first to taste the bitterness of exile.*

For three years this state of things continued. Jehoiakim paid his tribute and kept quiet. Then (B.C. 603), either relying on the hope of help from Egypt, or thinking he could venture to stand alone, he rebelled and drew upon himself a swift punishment. Jeremiah, in the meantime, had again and again warned the king and his nobles of the madness of such an attempt, and had met with scorn and outrage in return. There seems reason to believe (unless we see in chap. xiii. the record of a prophetic dream, like that of Ezekiel's journey to Jerusalem, Ezek. viii. 3) that he had twice travelled to the Euphrates during this period, and so had had opportunities for renewing his acquaintance with the Chaldean king, or with his generals. And so

* This fact is gathered from Jer. xxxv., which shows that they were in Jerusalem at the time of its capture, and from the superscription of Ps. lxxi. in the Greek version, as written by or for "the sons of Jonadab, the first that were led into captivity."

when the rebellion of Jehoiakim broke out, Nebuchadnezzar does not seem to have thought it necessary to proceed himself and lead his own generals against the city. It was enough to send some "bands of Chaldees" to co-operate with the old hereditary foes of Judah, the Syrians, the Moabites, and the Ammonites (2 Kings xxiv. 2). The king, who had made himself hated by his luxury and oppression, building a palace, even at that time of misery, "ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion," as if in ostentatious disregard of the sufferings of his people, died soon after the attack began, and the state of parties in Jerusalem is shown by the manner in which his death was received. Not only were the usual honours of a kingly funeral denied him, but there were none to lament him; no wailers to raise their cry—"Ah, Lord!" or "Ah, his glory!" He was buried with the burial of an ass, "cast out" (probably thrown over the wall to show the invaders that he was really dead), "beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. xxii. 18, 19). His younger son, a boy of the age of eighteen, succeeded him as Jehochin or Jeconiah. The reign lasted but three months. Nebuchadnezzar resented the appointment of a king by any other than himself as an act of rebellion. He led his armies in person and besieged Jerusalem. The city was taken for the second time, and now the captivity began on a new and more terrible scale. The king himself was carried to Babylon, thrown into a dungeon and left there to languish for seven-and-thirty years, till the death of Nebuchadnezzar, when he was released by Evil-Merôdach (Jer. lli. 31). With him went his nearest relatives, his eunuchs, his chief officers and

counsellors, ten thousand "men of might," the flower of the host of Judah. With him, too, were the false prophets who had been holding out hope of victory and freedom, some, at least, of the priest and elders whom we find with Ezekiel by the bank of Chebar, all the smiths and workmen who might have helped to supply the troops of Judah with swords and shields; none remained but "the poorer sort of the people of the land." In the prophet's words, those who were taken were as the "best ripe figs," those who were left, so vile and worthless that they were as "figs vile and worthless, too bad to be eaten" (Jer. xxiv. 1—10). Another vassal king, a son of Josiah's, was appointed, and, in the nature of the case, must have seemed at the time likely to be faithful to the Babylonian king, the representative therefore, of the Chaldean party of which Jeremiah and Ahikam were the chief members. We may perhaps, trace their influence in the new name which he assumed, Zedekiah, = *Righteous is Jehovah* as bearing witness in its very syllables of the truth which Jeremiah was never weary of proclaiming.*

I do not follow the details of the eleven years of Zedekiah's reign. The confused state in which the prophecies of Jeremiah have come down to us make it difficult to arrange them and the events to which they refer, in a right order. But it is well to note before we pass on to what will form the subject of a second paper, THE LIFE OF THE EXILES AT BABYLON that during the whole period there are proofs that Jeremiah and his party were in constant active communication with the exiles at Babylon and with

* Comp. the paper on "SHILOH—EMMANUEL—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," in this volume.

Nebuchadnezzar himself. He sends (and the letter is carried by a son of Shaphan and a son of Hilkiah) to bid the former seek the peace of the city to which they had been carried captive (xxix. 7). He warns them against any rash and premature attempt to abridge the appointed term of the seventy years of the captivity. It is obvious that he was the advocate of the same policy at home, that he and Baruch his scribe were on that account the objects of the hatred and persecution of the Egyptian party, that for this he was thrown into the dungeon where he nearly lost his life, that he was openly accused of "falling away to the Chaldæans" (Jer. xxxvii. 13). The king himself oscillated between the two rival parties. He had been placed on the throne, as we have seen, by the Chaldæan king. Then under the influence of those whose hopes had been excited by the growing power and energy of the new king of Egypt, Apries, the Pharaoh Hophra of the Bible (Jer. xlv. 30), he ventured on rebellion, and ceased to pay tribute. The Chaldæan army again besieged the city, and the king in his panic turned to Jeremiah for help and counsel. The rumoured march of the army of Apries led the invaders to raise the siege for a time, and the hopes of the anti-Chaldæan party were once again raised (Jer. xxxvii. 5—11). But the relief was temporary only. A larger army was sent under Nebuzaradan, and after a siege of nearly eighteen months the city was once more captured. This time the destruction was more thorough than it had ever been before. The Chaldæans slew the young men of Judah with the sword in the court of the sanctuary. All that was perishable in the temple was destroyed by fire. Only its

foundation stones remained. The king was carried before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah on the east bank of the Orontes, on the high road between Babylon and Palestine, his children slain before his face, his eyes put out, and he himself carried in chains to Babylon.* The nobles of Judah who had been the king's advisers when he ventured to assert his independence were put to death, probably, as was the usual Assyrian custom, by impaling. The captivity was now completed. None but "the poor of the people, which had nothing," were left behind and they entered upon the vineyards and fields of the exiled princes.

The respect and consideration with which Jeremiah is treated at this crisis indicates a long-standing acquaintance between him and the Chaldean generals. Nebuzaradan at once releases him from his chains, and offers him the choice of settling at Babylon under the king's protection, or remaining in Jerusalem (Jer. xxxix. 11; xl. 4). On his choosing the latter alternative, he supplies him with provisions, and pays him, partly as a reward for services, partly in compensation for his sufferings. Gedaliah, the son of his chief friend and protector Ahikam, is made governor of the land. It was no wonder that it should be so. When we remember that Daniel, under his new name of Belteshazzar, was already high in the king's favour, that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were "set over the affairs of the province of Babylon"—that they shared the faith, the hopes, the policy of Jeremiah

* The special form of punishment had been foretold, in an ambiguous language, by Ezekiel, "I will bring him to Babylon the land of the Chaldeans, yet *shall he not see it*, though he die there" (xii. 18).

it is clear that there must have been a strong influence in his favour at the court of Nebuchadnezzar. Even Ezekiel's work among the captives by the banks of Chebar, coinciding, as it did, in its general spirit with that of the prophet of Anathoth, predicting the overthrow of Egypt and Tyre, the two powers that as yet remained unsubdued by the Chaldaean king, may have tended to predispose him to look favourably on the prophet who had all along spoken and acted and suffered in his service. So at all events it was. One long chapter in the prophet's life was closed, a yet longer chapter in the history of the people. The former I have in part noticed in a previous Study.* With the fortunes of the miserable remnant who fled to Egypt or remained in Judah, I am not now concerned. The life of the nation, the stock out of which was to spring the new tree, was elsewhere. We must turn to see how the captives lived at Babylon, what effect the exile had on their thoughts, their hopes, their character, their institutions.

PART II.—THE YEARS OF EXILE.

OUR impressions as to the life of those who were carried off from the land of their fathers to end their days in that of the Chaldaeans, have, for the most part, I imagine, a certain vague picturesqueness. We bring before our mind's eye a few weary, sorrow-worn exiles—grey-haired men, and tearful women—sitting by the waters of Babylon, weeping in bitterness of soul as they remembered Zion, hanging on the willows, which seem to weep as in sympathy

* Comp. "THREE GENERATIONS OF JEWISH PATRIOTISM," *supra*.

with them, the harps which they had no longer the heart to touch. They are called on by their conquerors to sing for their delight one of the songs of Zion, and they will not sing the "Lord's song" in a strange land; but, instead of the old hymns of praise that had echoed in the courts of the Temple, breathe their prayers for the day of vengeance, when the "daughter of Babylon" too should lie, "wasted with misery," taking, in her turn, the woe she had meted out to others, beholding her children dashed against the stones (Ps. cxxxvii.).

Doubtless, as the psalm from which this description is taken shows, there is truth in such a picture. It was true as the poet's ideal of the exile, which every day's experience more or less completely realised. But in all such cases there is also the life of every day with all its manifold variations, the changing combinations of individual men and classes, the interests which lie below the surface, not impressing themselves on the imagination of poet or artist, yet in reality, by their secret, silent working, moulding the people for their future. And this was especially the case with the lot of the Babylonian captives. Their very number, with all the possibilities of companionship and sympathy which it involved, brought with it some mitigation of the bitterness of exile. And it must be remembered that, with some exceptions (probably those only who had obstinately taken part in the final rebellion of Zedekiah), they were not carried into slavery. The great monarchies of the East, cruel and hard as was their sway, were in this respect more merciful than the Athenians with all their culture, and the Romans with all their reverence for law. The message

of Rabshakeh, half-promising, half-threatening, that his master, the king of Assyria, would first permit those whom he conquered to eat of the fruit of their vines and fig-trees, and then would carry them away to a land like their own land—"a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil-olive and of honey" (Isa. xxxvi. 17)—was not altogether a mocking taunt. And so it was with the exile that followed on the Chaldean conquest. The captives, though transported from the land of their fathers as a measure of policy, were not taken into the market and sold as slaves, but were left in possession of their freedom. They lost, of course, the estates which they had possessed in the land of Judah, though many, it may be, cherished the hope of which the prophet of Anathoth had given them so noble an example (Jer. xxxii. 1—15) that they should one day return to claim them as their own again; but their gold and their silver they were allowed to take with them, and they were, even the poorest of them, in possession of a skill and knowledge in many things above that of their conquerors, and, as artizans and traders, as smiths and carpenters, as scribes and minstrels, might rise to a new opulence. It was, if we may illustrate the remote past by that which comes nearer to our own experience, like the deportation of the French Canadians of Grandpré which Longfellow has depicted in his "*Evangeline*"—like the removal of some of the tribes of the Caucasus which has taken place within a comparatively recent period—rather than like the hopeless and dreary lot which we connect with the names of Siberia or Cayenne.

So it was that at the very outset of the captivity,

within four years of the time when Jeremiah and the nobles of Judah had been carried to Babylon, we find that prophet (xxix. 1—7) writing to the exiles bidding them “build houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them.” They were able to meet together and listen to the harangues of false prophets, who, instead of seeking the peace of the city to which they had been led, prompted them to a rash revolt. This was, indeed, their chief danger. Two of these men stand out with an especial prominence, and we get in connection with their names a glimpse into one of the episodes of that strange time. Ahab and Zedekiah, we read, two men of profligate lives, gathered a party round them and held out the prospect of the speedy overthrow of Babylon—probably, like their brethren at Jerusalem within two short years—trusting to the “broke reed” of Egypt, as willing and able to support them. Their predictions came to the ear of the Chaldean king, and they were sentenced to the horrible death which seems at that time to have been the favourite punishment at Babylon for political or religious offences.* Their fate became a byword, and was uttered as their curse against their deadliest enemies. “The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire (Jer. xxix. 20—24). Another who appears is Shemaiah the Nehelamite (the latter word probably expressing, or at least alluding to, his pretensions as a dreamer of dreams), sought to counteract the influence which Jeremiah’s counsels exercised over the minds of the exiles, by conspiring with his enemies.

* Compare the sentence passed on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.



at Jerusalem. He sent letters from Babylon to Zephaniah, who stood next in authority to the high priest Seraiah,* and to all the priests, urging them in bitter and scornful language to do their work as "officers in the house of his Lord, for every man that is mad and maketh himself a prophet," and to "put him in prison, and in the stocks,"—and as the first and chief victim to be thus crushed, naming Jeremiah of Anathoth. He discloses to them what till then had perhaps been kept secret—that the prophet's letter had urged a policy of patient submission and contented industry, and had thus baffled the plans of those who reckoned on a simultaneous rising against the Chaldaean power at Babylon and Jerusalem (Jer. xxix. 24—32). It is probable from the submissive tone which Zephaniah elsewhere takes in his intercourse with Jeremiah (Jer. xxi. 1; xxxvii. 3), that he was more favourably disposed to the prophet than the writer of the letter thought. We read, at all events, that he showed the letter, as soon as he received it, to Jeremiah, and that a prophetic message was uttered against Shemaiah also, pronouncing failure and destruction upon him and his allies.

It is clear that Ezekiel had to contend with evils of a like kind, as he did his prophetic work by the banks of the Chebar. The prophets who saw a vain vision and spoke a lying divination, crying, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace, "building a wall and daubing it with untempered mortar"—the daughters of Israel who claimed to be among the exiles what Huldah had been at Jerusalem in the time of Josiah, wearing their "pillows" and "kerchiefs" (probably the received insignia of women

* The relative position of the two is found in 2 Kings xxv. 48.

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who claimed a prophetic inspiration), doing th
wretched work for "handfuls of barley and pie
of bread" (Ezek. xiii.)—these had to be resisted a
denounced by him, as Jeremiah had resisted a
denounced those whose ascendancy would have be
fatal to all tranquillity and true discipline at Bab
lon. The writings of the same prophet show
also something of the organization which was ke
up among the exiles. The "elders of Israel" we
still recognised as the representatives of the peopl
They watched the prophet's work with feelings
which fear, suspicion, reverence were strange
mingled, now whispering together, "by the wal
and in the doors of the house" in wonder what th
next word should be that came forth from Jeho
now coming in the name of the people to the pr
phet's dwelling and sitting down before him to hea
his message to the rebellious house (Ezek. viii. 1
xiv. 1; xx. 1; xxxiii. 31). According to a pr
bable explanation of one passage, they had eve
there, in the land of exile, a synagogue of som
kind, which was to them a "little sanctuary" to
remind them that God was as truly with them ther
as He had been in the Temple of Jerusalem (Ezek. xi
16). From him we learn the way in which the les
loyal and faithful among the people submitted to
their punishment, when all hopes of averting it, or
of immediate deliverance had been reluctantly aban
doned. It was not, they said, their fault. They
took up the proverb, which seems to have become
current at Jerusalem at an earlier stage of the cala
mities from which their nation suffered; and said
one to another, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek. xviii.

2; Jer. xxxi. 29). As at other times, so now, this condensed expression of one side of the law of retribution distorted till it became, not a paradox only, but a falsehood, led to a yet clearer apprehension and utterance of the truth than had been known before, and it was given to Ezekiel to proclaim that "the son should not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father bear the iniquity of the son," that each man stood in the awful solitude of his responsibility before the presence of the Lord God: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." But then, also, with that sentence of condemnation there was united the gospel of forgiveness: "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God;" "The wicked, when he turneth away from his wickedness that he has committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, . . . shall surely live; he shall not die" (Ezek. xviii.). So, too, we cannot doubt that many of the captives carried with them, as their stay and support, the promise which they had heard from the prophet whom they had revered as a friend and teacher, that the time was drawing near (though they knew not the appointed season) when God would make a "new covenant" with the house of Israel, when that which had been external, positive, ceremonial should fall into the background, and there should be a law of righteousness and truth, written on the hearts of men (Jer. xxxi. 31). To such men the words of Habakkuk (ch. ii. 4) spoken, primarily, in direct reference to the Chaldæan invasion—"The just by faith shall live," must have suggested thoughts like those which they suggested afterwards to St. Paul. Influences like these were, at any rate, at work,

all tending to prepare the way for the Truth which was greater than they were and was to embrace them all. The Babylonian captivity, over and above the discipline of suffering which was its most conspicuous feature, was also a marked stage in the spiritual education of the people of Israel.


It was hardly less a part of that education that they were brought into closer contact than they had ever been before with the darker elements of idolatry. They saw the worship which the Chaldeans paid to their serpent god Afraziab—the “dragon” of the apocryphal addition to the Book of Daniel. They beheld the licentious rites which made the temple of Mylitta, the Babylonian Aphrodite, a scene of systematic prostitution. They had to witness the desecration of the vessels of the temple in the feasts which the Babylonian kings held in honour of Bel or Nebo. And all these evils they were now led to connect, not with nations that were their friends and allies, but with their conquerors and oppressors. We cannot wonder that, year by year, their abhorrence of the false religion and corrupt worship with which they found themselves in contact, should become deeper and more intense. Whatever other evils they might afterwards yield to, whatever “unclean spirits,” more, and more powerful than the first, might enter into the house that had been left “empty and swept and garnished,” this, at least, did not return. Those who, during the long centuries that had preceded, had been evermore lapsing into the worship of many gods and of visible symbols, returned to the land of their fathers a monotheistic and iconoclastic people.

Here, too, in that exile of seventy years, other

changes came over them. Living in the midst of a people who had learnt, whatever might have been their origin, to speak a language which differed from their own only as one dialect of a common stock differs from another, they came, by degrees, to adopt new words, new phrases, new modes of writing. The large square characters which we know as Hebrew now, they learnt from their Chaldaean masters. The change had already begun which, within a hundred years, made it necessary for the people to have teachers who should interpret their ancient books for them (Neh. viii. 7). Nor can we think of the captivity as without a very decisive influence on the canon of the Old Testament. It was, in the nature of the case, inevitable that many books that had once held a high place in Hebrew literature should be destroyed when the Holy City was taken and sacked. The official chronicles of the kings of Judah, the histories of individual reigns by Iddo or Ahijah, the book of the wars of the Lord, the book of Jasher, the visions of prophets, the songs of poets, the proverbs of the wise—these, of which we find traces here and there in the canonical books, must have been at the time well remembered. The fact that we find traces only, is a proof that then, or soon afterwards, they were forgotten and ceased to be. It was the natural task of the scribes of the people, at such a period, to gather up the fragments that remained, that nothing should be lost; to collect, edit, epitomize, arrange, the more precious records that were left, so as to form a whole. It was, indeed, both in its nature and its form, a library rather than a book; but it was a library within manageable compass, easily

carried from place to place, easily multiplied by transcription. The final arrangement, the sealing, as it were, of the sacred volume, did not take place, as far as the Hebrew text was concerned, till the time of Malachi, perhaps not till that of the Maccabees. The Jews of Alexandria looked on the collection as one to which, even after the later of those two dates, it was still lawful to add other books of like interest or like utility, and the writings which we know as the Apocrypha, were, according to their subject-matter, placed in the same volume with them.

But it is manifest that this very work of compilation led men to dwell upon the past with an almost undue exclusiveness, and deadened the capacity for original thought and action. The overthrow of Babylon did indeed call out something of the old prophetic spirit. But it was bestowed in scant measure as compared with the fulness of its earlier manifestations. The age of scribes succeeded to the age of prophets, and the first great representative of that age will meet us when we have to deal with the return from Babylon in the person of Ezra. The system—the school, if one may so speak—of which he was the representative must have been moulding the character of the people for many years. In the earlier stages of the captivity, however, there was enough in the hopes and fears, the sorrow and the indignation, of the exiles to utter itself in the lyric form which, with the Israelites, in a yet greater degree than with most other nations, was the natural expression for strong emotions. The present structure of the Book of Psalms, and the absence in most instances of any



historical criteria for fixing the date of individual hymns, make all hypotheses about them more or less conjectural; and Psalm cxxxvii. is, perhaps, the only one of which it can be said, with no shadow of doubt, that it came from the lips of those who "sat down and wept" by the "waters of Babylon." But it is, at least, worth while to note some others to which the same date has been assigned, with, at least, great probability, by critics of eminence, like Mr. Perowne in England, and Ewald in Germany.* It gives a fresh interest to the familiar words—"Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God" (Ps. xlii.), to think of the man who remembered how he had "gone with the multitude to the house of God," who appealed to Jehovah to help him against an "ungodly nation;" as one who was dragged across the "land of Jordan" and the heights of Hermon, away from the "courts" which he had loved. The cry of the worshipper who can no longer find access to the "tabernacles" that were once so dear, who envies the very sparrows and swallows that found a nest on the altars of the Lord, who prays that God will once more "look on the face of his anointed" (Ps. lxxxiv.), has in it a deeper pathos, if we think of it as coming from that "anointed of the Lord," the son of Jehoiakim, who pined for so many years in his lonely prison. In Psalm lxxix. we may hear the cry of one who remembers with shame and grief how the "heathen have come into the inheritance of Jehovah"—how

* I name the two writers whose commentaries have been in this respect most suggestive to me, without discussing the views which they respectively take of individual psalms.

they have "defiled the temple and laid Jerusalem on heaps, giving the bodies of the saints to the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the earth," and "shedding their blood like water." In Psalm lxxx. we may recognise a like lamentation from one who had belonged to the northern kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and had become an exile in the earlier Assyrian captivity; who thought accordingly of Jehovah as of one "who leadeth *Joseph* like a sheep," whose prayer was that "*before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses,*" He would "stir up his strength, and come to help" his people. The closing prayer of Psalm li., that God would "do good in his good pleasure to Zion" and "build the walls of Jerusalem" may well be thought of as having been added to the hymn which owed its birth to David's penitence, by one who lived when those walls were lying waste and desolate. In the words of Psalm lxxiv., which bring before us the havoc that men had made of all the carved work of the Temple with their axes and hammers, the ruthlessness with which they had "burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land," we have a picture which, though it may possibly belong to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and his desecration of the sanctuary, describes only too faithfully that which had been wrought by the Chaldæan armies.

It remains only to note the succession of events as they affected the condition or the feelings of the exiles. Starting from B.C. 602, the year in which Nebuchadnezzar carried off "many of the children of Israel and of the king's seed" (Dan. i. 3), as the date of the commencement of the captivity, we have the first great depopulation of the kingdom of

Judah in B.C. 599. The reign of Zedekiah over the remnant that remained brings us to B.C. 588, and then the work is completed. Only the poorest of the land are left under Gedaliah. In B.C. 574, they heard that Tyre, after an obstinate resistance of thirteen years, had at last yielded to the arms of the Chaldaean king. At some time, the date of which cannot be fixed with certainty, but which was probably towards the close of his reign, they were exposed to the trial of their faith caused by the king's insane and impious egotism, and apparently were only delivered from it by the heroic faithfulness of the three eunuchs, who, as the representatives of their nation, refused to bow down before the golden image which the king, who had already described himself on his monument as "begotten by his God Merôdach," had set up to be worshipped and adored. A little while after this, the insanity took the more terrible and startling form of lycanthropy, the state in which the man believes himself to be a brute beast, and lasted, according to the interpretation we give, to the "times" of Dan. iv. 25, for seven years or seven months. In B.C. 561, the death of Nebuchadnezzar left his son, Evil-Merôdach, to succeed; and the kindness which that prince showed in releasing Jeconiah from his long imprisonment implies, probably, a general temper of indulgence towards the captives at large. The period that followed was one of many changes.*

* The chronology of the whole period is too confused, the identification of the Biblical names of Belshazzar and Darius the Mede with those named by Greek historians, or the Babylonian inscriptions, too uncertain, for any one to speak positively. I have followed the arrangement adopted by Mr. Rawlinson and M. Le Normant. The most conspicuous rival theory is that which identifies the Belshazzar of the Book of Daniel with the Evil-

Evil-Merôdach was assassinated in B.C. 559 by his brother-in-law, Nergal-Sharezer, who died, in his turn, after a short reign of four years, in battle against Cyrus and the Persians, in B.C. 555, leaving a child as his successor. After a few months, the Chaldean nobles felt the necessity of a warrior king and chose one whose name meets us in the two forms of Labynetus and Nabonadius, who for seventeen years carried on the defence of the Babylonian monarchy against the arms of Persia. During all this period, Daniel, and probably the other Jews who with him had been promoted to high office, continued to be held in honour. They remembered at the time of Belshazzar's feast, that the old man (he must have been then eighty at the least) had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar "master of the magicians and astrologers" (Dan. v. 11). Belshazzar himself, who appears in the Book of Daniel and in Baruch (i. 11, 12) as the son of Nebuchadnezzar and king of Babylon, was in reality the son of Nabonadius (probably by a daughter of the great king, and so more honoured than his brothers), and shared the sovereignty with him, remaining to occupy Babylon while his father defended Borsippa. In B.C. 538, if we accept the commonly-received chronology, the final blow was struck by "Darius the Mede," probably the general in command of the forces of Cyrus; and he became king or satrap of the conquered province. The relations in which he and his master, Cyrus, stood to the prophet and his people will form the subject of my third paper.

Merôdach of Jeremiah liii. 31, and Darius the Mede with Astyages. But the objections to this are, I believe, insuperable.

III.—THE RETURN FROM EXILE.

FOR twenty-three years before the night in which Babylon was taken, the Jewish exiles there must have watched with the keenest interest the rapid progress of the Persian king, who bore the name of Koresh, better known to us in its Greek form of Cyrus. With the legends which cluster round his history in the narratives of Herodotus and Xenophon we are not now concerned; they were probably altogether unknown to Daniel and Zerubbabel, and their contemporaries. But the Babylonian Jews must have felt, whatever hypothesis we adopt as to minor points of detail, that every step in that progress brought them nearer to the hour of their deliverance. If we accept the received dates of the books of the Old Testament, as we now have them, they had heard from one whose authority they could not doubt, that the Medes were to be instrumental in the overthrow of Babylon, as they had been in that of Nineveh (Isa. xiii. 17); that Elam (*i.e.*, Persia) was to be joined with them in that work (Isa. xxi. 2); that Bel should bow down, and Nebo stoop before their destined conqueror (Isa. xlvi. 1); that that conqueror was to bear the name of Koresh, and was to restore Jerusalem and the Temple to something of their old glory. He was to be thought of under no less noble a title than the Messiah, the Anointed, of the Lord (Isa. xlv. 28; xlv. 1). They had heard from a later prophet, in words that were as an echo of the older ones, that "Jehovah had stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes," because "his device was against Babylon to destroy

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it" (Jer. li. 11). He had told them of the seven years which were to be the limit of their bondage (Jer. xxv. 12); and those years, whatever period might be taken as their commencement, were now drawing to their close. To Daniel, whatever he had been suggested by these intimations must have been strengthened by the vision of the great image with the head of gold, and the arms of silver, and the thighs of brass, which came before the Chaldean king, and which he was called on to interpret (Dan. 2. 31—45). When the time of fulfilment was now approaching, and he himself, in the third year of Belshazzar (*sc.* of his father Nabonadius), saw the "image with two horns pushing westward and northward and southward," he was taught that it represented the power of the kings of Media and Persia (Dan. 2. viii. 20). The way had been prepared for him to understand the mysterious PERES of the handwriting on the wall; and though the word, as such, meant the Hebrew ear "*division*" only, to see in it an intimation, through that play upon words and names which the Hebrew prophets were so fond, that the Chaldean kingdom was to be "*divided*," and to be given to the Medes and *Persians*" (Dan. vi. 28).

But, apart even from these prophetic intimations of the future, there was enough in the great movement of which the Persians were the representative to rouse the eager interest and sympathy of the Jewish exiles. They held a creed which was far less remote from that of the Hebrews than was the religion of the Assyrians or Chaldeans. To whatever periods we assign the work of Zoroaster, it is clear that he transmitted to the nation who acknowledged him as a prophet the highest form of heathenism.

which the Jews had yet encountered. There was no worship of the heavenly host as among the Chaldæans, nor of brute beast or bird or creeping thing as among the Egyptians, nor of trees and serpents as among the Turanian races. They acknowledged one Lord of heaven, to whom, as the great Creating Spirit, they gave the name of Ormuzd. They thought of Him as effecting the work of creation by a divine Word, which was the expression of his sovereign Will, as governing the world by One consubstantial with himself, Mithra, at once the guardian and the judge of men. The sin and misery—the darkness, moral and physical—in the world they ascribed to the agency of Ahriman, the Evil Spirit; but they held that, in the end, he and his works would be destroyed, and Ormuzd reign supreme in a world restored to blessedness. They thought of various orders of spiritual beings as engaged in fulfilling the commands of Ormuzd, as the angels and archangels of the Jewish Scriptures did the work of Jehovah. And they worshipped Ormuzd without interposing the likeness of any visible *form*. Fire was the only symbol of the divine nature. The sun, as the source of light, might come in a later age to be the object of direct worship; but in the earlier stages of the religion of Zoroaster there is no trace of it. They had, as the Jews had, a sacred caste, a tribe set apart to repeat the appointed prayers, to watch over the sacred fire, to teach the people.

The religion of Zoroaster had originated in a protest against the sensuous and polytheistic tendencies of the Aryan tribes of Northern India, as that of Israel had in the call which separated Abraham from the polytheism of the Assyrians and Chaldæans.

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Through their admixture with the Medes, who were more subject to Turanian influences, and had probably a Turanian element in their population, it lost somewhat of its purity. Cyrus appeared as reformer; and, in the name of Ormuzd, waged war against the Turanian nations (Scythians, Massagæ and others) with whom he came in contact, as being the servants of Ahriman. The whole period was indeed, as I have said, one of struggle and fermentation. Large hordes of Scythians had poured down upon the plains of Mesopotamia, upon Syria and Palestine, in the time of Josiah. The prophecies of Ezekiel (chap. xxxviii., xxxix.) as to Gog and Magog, Meshech and Tubal, obscure as they are in their details, at least show the terror which that invasion had caused, the impression that had been left on men's minds that they were the most formidable enemies of Israel. The expeditions of Cyrus, at the close of his reign, against the Massagætæ, of Darius against the Scythians that had found their way round the Crimea to the plain of the Danube, were more than the offspring of an insatiable ambition. They were, we may well believe, the outgrowths of the long struggle for supremacy, religious as well as political, between the Iranian and Turanian races.

Of that struggle the exiles of Babylon had some sense been for fifteen years spectators. It was natural, even if the guidance of prophecy had failed them, that all their sympathy should be on the side of the conqueror, in whom they found so much that they could recognise as analogous to their own beliefs rather than on that which was identified with the special form of idolatry, serpent worship, which they most abhorred. It may well be that, as there had

been a Chaldean party within the walls of Jerusalem, so now there was a Persian party within the walls of Babylon, playing into the hands of the invader, helping him in the surprise by which the city was captured. There may have been a human element, as well as a divine prediction, in the words which told the startled revellers of Belshazzar's feast that Babylon was already at that very hour in the hands of the Medes and Persians. The immediate recognition of the exiled Jews by the Persian conqueror is at least significant, and reminds us of the way in which Jeremiah was treated by Nebuzaradan on the capture of Jerusalem. Daniel is placed by Darius the Mede (Dan. vi. 2), apparently the satrap left by Cyrus in command of Babylon, at the head of the administration of the conquered province. The first act of Cyrus is to permit the exiles to return to their own land, and to rebuild their city and their temple; and the terms of the proclamation implied a recognition of the fact that the God of heaven, whom he worshipped, was identical with Jehovah, the "Lord God" of Israel. The vessels of which the Temple had been plundered, and which we last read of as brought out in the frantic revelry of Belshazzar's feast, were formally restored (Ezra i. 1—11). Are we not led to think of these favours as at once tokens of sympathy and the reward of services? Is it not clear that the Jews must have met him and his people with the blessings which they invoked on those who should take the children of the daughter of Babylon, and dash them against the stones? that they must have addressed him, as Isaiah had done by anticipation, as the "Shepherd," the "Anointed," of Jehovah?

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We have now to trace the stages of the return which Cyrus had thus sanctioned. Our materials are found, partly in the writings of Ezra and Nehemiah, partly in those of the contemporary prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The apocryphal books that bear the name of Esdras or Ezra are, the first of them, a historical romance, and the second a spurious apocalypse, and introduce nothing but confusion. The narrative of Josephus, who follows and exaggerates the former, is, for the same reason, utterly untrustworthy. We must confine ourselves to the records which are more nearly contemporary.

The Jews were, as I have said, treated with exceptional favour. They were recognised as having in modern language, the rights of nationality. The act of the king, in restoring the vessels of the Temple, was followed by others, who helped on the work with their silver and gold (Ezra i. 3, 4, 6), with goods, and with beasts of burden. The representative of the house of David, Zerubbabel ("born Babel"), the "son of Shealtiel" (reckoned as such probably by adoption†), who, after the death of Jeconiah and Shealtiel, had succeeded to the title "prince of Judah," was now appointed as satrap over the province which he was sent to reorganize.

* The character of 1 Esdras is shown by its representing Zerubbabel as a young man at the court of Darius, obtaining his favour by a rhetorical speech in praise of truth. The genuine book shows that he had been Sheshbazzar or governor of Judah from the reign of Cyrus onwards. The fondness for embellishments of this kind, the want of perception as to chronological accuracy, were the besetting sin of the later Jewish historiographers.

† In 1 Chron. iii. 19, he appears as the "son of Pedaias." In Luke iii. 27, Shealtiel, or Salathiel, appears as the "son of Neri." The probability is that the line of Solomon had failed altogether, that Jeconiah, as Jeremiah had foretold, died childless, the last of the royal house, and that the gap was filled up from the line of Nathan (Jer. xxii. 24).

with the title of Sheshbazzar, or governor. We can well imagine the stir and excitement which the contemplated return would cause among the Babylonian exiles. Some, indeed, preferred to remain on the lands and in the houses where they had found a home. Others attached themselves to the court of the Persian king in Susa or Persepolis, and rose to favour there. But the number who were registered in the census taken on their return was enough to give the migration the character of a national movement. There were 42,360, including in that number 4,289 priests, and 341 Levites.* They had with them the Nethinim and Solomon's servants, the remnant, *i.e.*, of the Canaanite population which had been dedicated to the more menial work of the Temple, hewers of wood and drawers of water,—upwards of 7,000 slaves of other races, horses and mules, camels and asses in proportion.

Of the journey we have no record,† and can only picture what it must have been to them to see the hills and valleys, the meadows and the rivers which some of them had known of old, and of which the others had heard; to retrace the boundaries of their old possessions, to settle in the deserted and half-ruined houses. When they arrived, Zerubbabel was naturally, at once as heir of David and as the representative of the Persian king, the chief authority in

* The disproportion is curious and not easy to be explained. For some reason or other the Levites were more ready to remain at Babylon than the priests, and in the second stage of the return, under Ezra, held aloof in much the same way, and had to be pressed with some sternness to share the work of their brethren (Ezra viii. 15—20).

† The account given of the later migration, under Ezra, makes it probable that there was a great encampment of the whole host on the banks of the Euphrates, with solemn prayers and thanksgivings, before they started.

the reconstituted province. The position which occupies in the genealogy given by St. Luke (iii. 27) as descended from David through the line of Nathan as well as through that of Solomon, shows that he had a double claim, as uniting in himself the inheritance of the two royal houses.* Such an one was likely to raise in the people and their prophets, Solomon and Hezekiah and others had done, Messianic expectations. They saw in him one in whom the sentence passed upon Jeconiah was reversed. So far from being flung away, as a man might fling the signet ring from his right hand (Jer. xxii. 24) he, as the chosen of the Lord, is to be as such a signet for ever (Hag. iii. 23). He is to stand as one of the two anointed ones through whom, as through golden pipes, flows the oil of divine grace and blessing (Zech. iv. 14).

Conspicuous by the side of Zerubbabel, as being also the "anointed of the Lord," was the representative of the line of Aaron, Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest.† He too had been born in captivity. His father, it would seem, had been too young at the time when the Temple had been destroyed to have entered on the functions of the priesthood.

* Comp. the significant prominence given at this time to the "family of the house of Nathan," as well as to that of David, Zech. xii. 12.

† The name appears in 1 Esdras in its Greek form of "Jesu." As with the case of the older hero who led the people into Canaan, the identity of name with that of the greater Saviour is not to be forgotten when we are dealing with the ideal, typical aspects of life and work. The name of Josedech too, identical in meaning with Zedekiah, "Jehovah is righteous," is, like the name of the king, itself the embodiment of a prophecy, the echo of the thought which Jeremiah had uttered in the words, "THE LORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." When he gave his son the name of "Joshua" it was, we may well believe, in the spirit of the hope which the words suggested.

His grandfather, Seraiah, had then held the position of "chief priest," and had been taken prisoner by Nebuzaradan, carried to Riblah, and there put to death by order of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 18—21). On his death, Josedech, of course, succeeded to the title, though the functions were in abeyance, and was in his turn succeeded by Joshua. Accompanying these two leaders, though not appearing on the scene till fifteen years later, were the two prophets, Haggai, bearing the name of the "messenger" or "angel" of the Lord (Hag. i. 13), and Zechariah. The latter certainly, the former probably, belonged to the priesthood. Iddo, the grandfather of Zechariah, is named (Neh. xii. 4) among the sons of Aaron who came up with Joshua and Zerubbabel.

The exiles had started, probably, in the spring, and the first feast which they were able to keep after their return to the holy city was that of Tabernacles. It was kept as in fear and trembling. Their old enemies—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Philistines—were around them, and they were weak and the city was defenceless. Their only security lay in the protection given them by the Persian king. They contented themselves at first with rebuilding the altar of burnt offerings and renewing the daily sacrifice, the observance of the Sabbath, and the new moon festivals. Preparations were made in the mean time for the great work of restoration. The treaty between Hiram and Solomon (1 Kings v. 1—12) served as a precedent, and a contract was made on nearly the same terms. The Phœnicians of Tyre and Zidon were to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the harbour of Joppa, and were to receive in return the corn and wine and oil which

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the plains and valleys of Palestine produced abundantly, and upon which they in their narrow strip of coast territory were, through all their history dependent (comp. Acts xii. 20). Whether the "sons" and the "carpenters" who were employed in the work were also Phœnicians, as they had been in the days of David and Solomon, is left in some doubt. Possibly the Jews had acquired since that period sufficient skill in architecture to undertake the work themselves. The work went on well, and within thirteen months of their arrival they were able to hold a solemn assembly for laying the foundation. Once again the priests appeared in their apparel and blew their silver trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, made music with their cymbals. The traditions of the Temple had not been forgotten, and the service was renewed "after the pattern of the ordinance of David," and the old antiphonal chants were revived, and the people joined in the loud Hallelujahs with a great shout. With that shout however, there was mingled a strangely discordant sound of wailing and lamentation. Some there were in that crowd old and grey-headed, "priests, and Levites, and chiefs of the fathers," who had passed the limit of the threescore years and ten, and with them the memory of the past was stronger than their exultation in the present. They had seen the "first house," the "holy and beautiful" house. They had gone with the "multitude that kept holy-day" to the house of God; and now they stood there, the last survivors of a race that had passed away, and they could not restrain their grief. "They wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the

shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud voice, and the noise was heard afar off." The emotion was natural and claims our sympathy, but it contained in it the germ of a perilous evil. That brooding over the vanished glory of the past led them, as it has led so many others, to be negligent and inactive in the present, and became an excuse for a selfish and cowardly apathy.

There is one memorable Psalm, the 118th, which gains every way in interest and meaning, if we think of it as connected with the events just mentioned.* It corresponds in every way to the account given in the book of Ezra of the services of that day. Its opening verses repeat four times over the words which are given in the history as the burden of that day's psalmody, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." It begins with the Hallelujah in which the people joined as with the sound of many waters. It is the psalm of those who have passed through the discipline of suffering, and have been led beyond all their expectations to liberty and peace. The thrice-repeated words, "All nations compassed me about," speak of the disquietude caused, as we have seen, by the neighbouring tribes to the returning exiles. When we read, "The voice of joy and health is in the *tabernacles* of the righteous," we can imagine with what special force the words

* The *consensus* of nearly all modern interpreters refers it to this period. With regard to the special occasion there is less unanimity, some referring it to the first laying of the foundation, some to the dedication of the Temple, some to the Feast of Tabernacles under Ezra. I am inclined to think of it as having been written for, and sung at the first Feast of Tabernacles after the return, and then used, with adaptations, at the later great gatherings of the people.

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would come to those who then were, or had recently been, keeping their Feast of Tabernacle dwelling in the temporary huts which they constructed of the branches of the olive and the fir tree, the myrtle and the palm, and rejoicing in the great deliverance which God had given them. The word that spoke of the "gates of righteousness," the "gate of the Lord," were as a proclamation that what David had declared, in Psalms xv. and xxiv. as to the nature and conditions of true worship for the first Temple, was true also of the second. The verse which acquired afterwards a higher and more sacred meaning, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes," manifestly draws its imagery from the work in which the Psalmist, on this supposition, had so recently taken part.* Some incident in the progress of the works had probably served as the starting-point of the parable. Some stone, a fragment, we may conjecture, of the old Temple, rescued from its ruins and had seemed to the architects unfit for the work of binding together the two walls that met at right angles to each other. They would have preferred some new block of their own fashioning. But the priests, it may be, more conversant with the traditions of the Temple, knew that that was the right place for it, and that no other stone would answer

* We may hazard the supposition that the Psalm was written by one of the two prophets of the time. Comp. the prominence in Zechariah of parables and illustrations drawn from the builder's work, the "stone" of iii. 9; iv. 7; the "house" and "timber" of v. 4, 11; the "line" of i. 16; the "carpenters" of i. 20; the "measuring line for the walls of Jerusalem" of ii. 1; the "plumb-line" in the hand of Zerubbabel of iv. 10. The prophet lives, as it were, among the works of the rising Temple.

half as well. The trial was made, and the issue answered their expectations. Could they fail to see that this was a type and figure of what was then passing in the history of their nation? Israel had been rejected by the builders of this world's empires, and seemed now about to be once more the "head of the corner." Men might be tempted to look for other guidance than that given them in the two "anointed ones," the representatives of the house of Aaron and the house of David, but it was given to Zerubbabel to bid the "great mountain" of prejudice, selfishness, antagonism "become a plain," and he was to bring forth the "head-stone," of the spiritual as of the literal Temple, with shoutings of joy and triumph, crying, "Grace, grace unto it!" (Zech. iv. 7). The Hosanna that follows ("Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord"), as it continued to be through the centuries that followed, the great anthem of the Feast of Tabernacles, may be thought of without much risk of error, as having originated in that first celebration of the feast after the return from exile. It may have formed part of the special ceremonial of the great days connected with the construction of the second Temple that this sacrifice was to be bound to the horns of the altar, not, as we render the word, "with *cords*," but with "twined garlands"* of the boughs of trees, which were at all times so conspicuous among the accessories of that feast.

This, however, was the beginning, not the end. The descendants of the mingled races who had been

* The word is translated "thick boughs," in Ezek. xxxi. 3, 10, 14, and in Lev. xxiii. 40, and Neh. viii. 15, is used with special reference to the boughs that were used at the Feast of Tabernacles. Luther renders it "mit Maien," and in a note maintains its connection with that festival.

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brought into Samaria by Esarhaddon claimed, worshippers of Jehovah, a share in the work that was going on. They demanded, *i.e.*, to be recognised as Israelites. To the Jewish priests and princes they were simply the mongrel brood of an uncle race, whom they might admit individually as proselytes, but whom they could not acknowledge as being of the seed of Abraham. Foiled in this attempt, the Samaritans retaliated by thwarting the work from which they were excluded. The death of Cyrus and his expedition against the Massagetæ, deprived the Jews of their protector. His successor, Cambyses the Ahasuerus of Ezra iv. 6, probably inherited his father's iconoclastic scorn of the religions of Babylon and Egypt, but was too much occupied in his Egyptian and Libyan campaigns to take any active part in defence of the people whom Cyrus had held in such high honour. But upon his death, in B. C. 522, there was, for the time, the prospect of counter-revolution, in favour of the sacerdotal caste throughout the Persian empire. A Magian priest Gomates, personated the character of a son of Cyrus Smerdis, who had been put to death by Cambyse and succeeded in getting himself recognised as king. He began by undoing all that Cyrus had done, giving prominence to the Median as distinct from the Persian element in the *cultus* of the nation, introducing new rites and prayers and hymns of a lower and less spiritual type than those which had been used under Cyrus.

To this usurper, who appears in the book of Ezra under the name of Artaxerxes, the enemies of Judah addressed themselves. They laid stress on their eastern origin. As being descended from Baby

lonians, Medes, Persians,* they might claim the support of the Median king. They urged on him the danger of permitting the "rebellious and bad city" to raise its head again. They bade him turn to the "book of the records" of his fathers for proof that it had been as a thorn in the side of the Assyrian and Chaldæan monarchies. The policy of the king led him to return the answer which they desired. He identified himself not with the religious reform of which Cyrus had been the leader, but with the sacerdotal reaction of the party among the Medes which attached itself to the Chaldæan system. An edict went forth that the building of the city should cease. The Samaritans were strong enough to enforce it, and Zerubbabel and Josedech had to wait for the arrival of a better time. Happily the change came soon. The Persian nobles detected the fraud that had been practised on them, conspired against the pseudo-Smerdis, and slew him in his palace. Darius, whom they chose as his successor, married the daughter of Cyrus, and adopted his policy in all things, reversed what had been done by Gomates and the Magi, restored the purer Persian ritual,† carried on the warfare against the Turanian races. The hopes of the Jews revived. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who, as such,

* The names of the tribes in Ezra iv. 9 are not easily identified with any known geographical position, but Gesenius and many other scholars refer most of them to some part of the Median territory. The Assyrian king made the two conquered countries interchange their inhabitants, and so the ten tribes were carried off to the "cities of the Medes," who were in their turn sent to Samaria.

† Comp. the well-known inscription on the rock of Behistun. Darius speaks—"The rites and prayers which Gomates the Magian introduced I abolished. . . . Thus did I by the grace of Ormuzd."

had watched the signs of the time, and knew the significance of the first steps that the new king had taken, saw that the time had come. They stirred Zerubbabel and Joshua to enter on the work again (B.C. 520).

New difficulties, however, soon presented themselves, both from without and from within. The first love of the exiles had waxed cold. Hindered in the work of building the house of Jehovah, they occupied themselves in building houses for themselves, and were content to let it lie waste. When they were urged to give and labour for the Temple they pleaded for delay. "The time is not come yet; the time that the Lord's house should be built has not yet come." The prophet had to call on them to "consider the ways"—to remind them of the scanty harvests, long-continued drought, blighted crops, which had come to them as sent from God to chastise them for their selfish luxury (Hag. i.). When this obstacle had been overcome, there was yet another. The feeling which had shown itself so touchingly on the day when the foundation of the Temple was laid now became an excuse for procrastination. If they would, they could never make the second Temple equal to the departed glory of the first. It was, "in their eyes, in comparison with it, nothing." Was it worth while to labour for an unsatisfying result? But the prophet was ready with an answer for this plea also. The watchword for Zerubbabel and Joshua, and for all the people of the land, was, "Be strong—be strong—be strong." They were to believe that the Spirit of the Lord was still with them to give them that strength. They were assured (in words that were afterwards

to receive a higher fulfilment than came within the horizon of the prophet's vision) that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than the glory of the former;" that the "*desirable things* of all nations"* should come; that in it the Lord should bestow his peace on all faithful worshippers. Did men question the sufficiency of the two leaders of the people to carry on the work to its completion? They were told, as to Zerubbabel, that in the midst of trouble and confusion, the "shaking of the earth and of the heavens," he would be as the signet on the right hand of Jehovah (Hag. ii. 1—23). Were there whispers against Joshua that he, by his own infirmities and sins, or those of the order of which he was the head, or of the people whom he represented, brought discredit on the work and hindered it from prospering? The vision of Zechariah (c. iii.) taught them to see in such whispers the promptings of the accusing spirit, the adversary, the "Satan" of the people of the Lord. If Joshua were "as a brand plucked out of the fire," was not that a token that he was chosen of the Lord? If he had been as one clothed in filthy garments, they were now taken from him, and the priestly mitre was on his head, and he was clothed with the priestly robes (Zech. iii.) In parables and dark sayings it was indicated that the "stone which the builders rejected" should be

* The rendering of the Authorised Version, "the desire of all nations," has become so much of a household word among us, and is pregnant with so many deep and sacred thoughts, that one cannot part from it without some reluctance; but the Hebrew word is plural, and is the same as that which is elsewhere used for "pleasant," or "precious" vessels. The reference that follows to the "silver" and the "gold" shows that what the prophet had in his mind was the glory that would accrue to the Temple from the free-will offerings of Gentile converts.

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"graven with seven eyes," i.e., that the seven gifts of the Spirit should be bestowed on the leader of the people. That leader was to be known by the prophetic title of the *BRANCH*; and Zerubabel and Joshua were each of them partial for shadowings of that future glory. Therefore it was said of the heir of the house of David that he should bring forth the headstone with shoutings, crying "Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. iv. 7). Therefore two crowns, the gift of three Jews who had arrived from Babylon with offerings for the Temple, were solemnly placed by the prophet's order on the high priest's head, in token that the future King should be also the Priest and Ruler, sitting on his throne—a priest after the order of Melchisedech (Zech. vi. 11). In darker language yet, there was a dim utterance of the hope of a universal church, and of the calling of the Gentiles. He, the *BRANCH*, the Priest, the King, should build the Temple of the Lord; and those that were "far off"—the Israelites who were scattered abroad, the heathen nations far and wide—should join in that great work (Zech. vi. 15).

I have endeavoured to sketch the bearing of the more prominent passages of the two prophets of the period upon the history of the return of the exiles. It is, of course, very far from being an exhaustive treatment of it. It may, however, be enough to teach us that the method of study in such cases is to remember that every such prophetic utterance, however difficult and dark to us, had its starting-point in the events of history, and took its colouring from the surroundings of time and place. It may often transcend that in which it originated, for the prophets were "men of desires," and they were ever

expecting that the kingdom of God was "nigh at hand," and would "immediately appear," and they spoke words accordingly which were not fulfilled in any earthly priest or king, or in the events of the world's history. But the connection remains as the solid ground on which to stand. From it alone can we rightly pass to the higher significance.

The internal difficulties were, through the words of the prophets and the spirit with which they animated the people, overcome with no long delay. Those from without presented no serious impediment. The Samaritans tried to alarm the new satrap of the provinces west of the Euphrates, and they came to Jerusalem with the question, "Who hath commanded to build this house and to make up this wall?" They took the names of the chief leaders of the work; but they did not proceed to any active interference. They knew that the policy of Cyrus had been readopted, and that the sympathies of Darius were with the men of Judah. And so they were contented with embodying the statements of the Jews themselves, in which they gave, as might be expected, due prominence to the decree of Cyrus, and appealed to the records of the Persian kings. The decree was found at Ecbatana, and republished by order of Darius. The work of the house of God was to go on. It was to be aided by grants from the king's treasury. The priests were to be supplied with all that they needed for the due maintenance of their worship. The worship of Jehovah was recognised as the "established" religion of the province. Acting on this edict, the priests and nobles went on with their work. The walls rose in height, and the building was restored to something of its old stateli-

ness. After four years it was once again solemn re-opened with a special service of dedication, and the old ritual was once more revived in its completeness. When the appointed season came round, they kept, with greater joy than they had known since their return from Babylon, their first great Passover.

With the celebration of that feast we end the first stage of the return of the exiles. It is followed by a period of more than fifty years of which we know but little, and in which all that can be attempted is to sketch the outline of its history by inference and conjecture. When it came to its close, there appeared on the scene the bearers of the three last great names of the Old Testament. We are brought at least near to the time of the last of the prophets. The history of the Return from the Captivity will not be complete without the survey of the life and work of Ezra, and Nehemiah, and Malachi.

PART IV.—THE LATER SEQUEL—EZRA—NEHEMIAH

AN interval of uncertain length—probably about fifty-eight years—comes in, as I have said between the 6th and 7th chapters of the book of Ezra. We have no sufficient materials with which to fill up the gap. But we may infer from the state of things described when the history recommences that the first eager hope and enthusiasm which animated the exiles on their return soon died away. Zerubbabel and Joshua were gathered to their fathers. The Messianic hopes which had clustered round their names were destined to wait for their fulfilment. Haggai and Zechariah also passed away or were

silent, and no prophet arose to take their place. Priests and people fell into the way of conciliating the neighbouring nations, Philistines, Edomites, Samaritans, by intermarrying with them, and foremost in the list of those who had been guilty of this sin were the sons of Joshua, the High Priest (Ezra x. 18).^{*} But little energy was shown in the work of restoration. The Temple, it is true, had been so far completed as to admit of the revival of the old services, but the walls of Jerusalem still remained "broken down" as they had been left after the capture of the city by the Chaldeans, and the gates were still charred with the flames which had consumed it. The "feeble Jews" became a byword to their neighbours (Neh. iv. 2). And there were yet worse evils pressing upon the people. Partly, perhaps, owing to the extent to which the land had fallen out of cultivation during the seventy years of the exile, partly also to a succession of unfavourable seasons, the province of Judæa seems to have suffered from a series of years of scarcity. Traces of famine and distress from this source have met us in the prophecies of Haggai, as the consequence of a long-continued drought (Hag. i. 11). Towards the close of the period of which I am now writing they were caused by excessive rains which, by their unprecedented violence, struck terror into the hearts of the people (Ezra x. 9, 13). One result of this had been that the poorer freeholders had found it difficult to pay the tribute to the Persian exchequer, and had borrowed money from their richer brethren, the

^{*} It is possible enough that this may be the scandal to which reference is made in the "filthy garments" of Zechariah's vision (Zech. iii. 4). The same tendency re-appears in a later generation of the same family (Neh. xiii. 4, 28).

nobles and rulers of Judah. And then, the distress continuing, the Jewish law of debt, neglected as regards its prohibition of interest, was applied, as to repayment, in all its strictness. The fields and vineyards of the debtors passed into the hands of the creditors. Not content with this, the latter carried their claims further, and seized (without regard apparently, to the humane provisions of the law of Moses as to the limitation of bondage in such cases to seven years, and the emancipation of all such slaves in the year of jubilee) on the sons and daughters of the former (Neh. v. 1—14). There was the danger of the growth of a pauperised and enslaved population, such as that with which Rome was threatened at the commencement of the republic. The eager pursuit of wealth and the disregard of the law shown in these evils displayed themselves in other forms. Harvests were reaped, the grapes gathered and pressed, markets held at the gates of the city, burdens brought in and out, on the Sabbath day. The Tyrians, who seem to have settled in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and to have carried on a trade in fish, in connection, probably with their fishing-boats at Joppa, naturally encouraged this laxity (Neh. xiii. 15—22).* Everything seemed tending to chaos and disorder. The priesthood, as we have seen, were setting the example of indifference. There were no prophets to reprove their vices and those of the people. And as yet no great organizer, or teacher, or ruler had arisen to cope with these growing evils. The age of scribe

* I have grouped together facts that meet us at different stages of the history. But the evils were in the nature of the case, all of them of gradual growth, and had prevailed, more or less, for years.

with all its characteristics, and some of them we must acknowledge to have worked for good, had not yet set in.

We are able, if we accept the conclusions of the most recent historical writers on this period, to fill up the history of this interval, as regards the Jews who remained in the land of their exile, with greater ease and certainty. The Ahasuerus who appears in the strange history of the Book of Esther, after having been identified with almost every Persian king from Darius to Artaxerxes Longimanus, seems now to be recognised by a fair *consensus* of interpreters as one and the same with Xerxes.* It is obvious that the petulance, the recklessness, the selfish magnificence which meet us in the Hebrew records agree with what we know of that king from the Greek historians and poets. If we accept this hypothesis, the dates of the Book of Esther become of some significance, and throw light upon the contemporary annals of Judah. The king's quarrel with Vashti is in the third year of his reign, *i.e.*, in B.C. 483. Then came the expedition against Greece, ending in the defeats at Salamis and Plataea in B.C. 480 and 479. The choice of Hadassah, or Esther, as the king's favourite queen, and the consequent favour shown to her uncle and guardian Mordecai, falls, by the same reckoning, in B.C. 479, on the king's return from Greece, and the conspiracy referred to in Esther ii. 21 may probably have been caused by the discontent of the Persian nobles at the

* The name Ahasuerus is a modification of the Hebrew *Achash-verosh*, and this in its turn represents the Persian word which appears in its Greek form in Xerxes and Artaxerxes. The Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther cannot be the same with the king of that name mentioned in Dan. ix. 1, nor with that of Ezra iv. 6.

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king's failure in his great schemes of conquest. The attempt of Haman to destroy the man who refused to show him honour and seemed likely to be a rival, and with him to crush his race, the defeat of that scheme, and the terrible retaliation inflicted on the Jews on their enemies throughout the cities of the empire, take their place in B.C. 474. It is clear if we receive these *data*, that during the later years of the reign of Xerxes Jewish influence must have been dominant at the Persian court, that the Jews of Jerusalem must have heard of the perils and the triumph of their brethren. It may be that they began even then to commemorate the feast of Purim which afterwards rose into such an exaggerated prominence, and to curse the memory of Haman. The effect of the triumph of their brethren in Persia may have secured for them for some years a safe though obscure, tranquillity.

The hypothesis which has suggested these thoughts has, at any rate, the merit of fitting in happily with the events that follow. If Mordecai occupied a position like that which he is described as filling in the court of Xerxes—able, we may believe, to lend his helping hand to his son and successor in the intrigues that followed on the death of that king, and to exercise his old ability in unravelling conspiracies—we are able to understand how it was that early in the reign of Artaxerxes we find the king's protection extended to "Ezra the priest," and meet later on, with a devout Jew as his favourite cup bearer. Of these two men, and of what they did partly separately, partly in conjunction, we have now to speak.

The name of Ezra is in many ways remarkable

What we have in the latter part of the book that takes its title from him has the special interest (which it shares, however, with Nehemiah) of being in part an autobiographical memoir.* And the man himself is the representative of a new order and a new age. Though not high priest, he stood in close relationship to the bearer of that title, and was descended from the Seraiah,† who filled that office at the time of the captivity, and who was the father of Jozedek, the grandfather of Joshua. He had not been among the exiles who had returned under Cyrus or Darius, but had grown up among the numerous and wealthy Jews who preferred remaining at Babylon, and had there devoted himself to the study and interpretation of the law. He became a "ready scribe" in it. It was natural that such a man, living at such a time, should collect together and arrange whatever writings in the literature of his people bore a sacred character; and though Scripture is silent on the subject, there is a high probability in favour of the Jewish tradition that the volume of the Old Testament first began to assume its present shape under him—that to him, or his superintendence, we owe the historical books, which are manifestly an epitome of older narratives, the preservation of the Psalms, which are as manifestly an anthology from older hymn-books.‡ In the later

* Both books are, however, in some respects, difficult. Made by some scribe in a later age, they give us fragments from the original memoir, not always in their right order, intersperse connective paragraphs from some lost chronicle, and leave long *lacunæ* which we have nothing to fill up.

† In Ezra vii. 1 he is described as the "son of Seraiah." But a comparison of dates shows that this, in its literal sense, is impossible, and we must take the phrase with the latitude of meaning which it bears in other Hebrew genealogies.

‡ If we admit with most modern critics, the existence of Psalms

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legends of Judaism, incorporated in the post-Christian apocryphal Second Book of Esdras, the tradition takes a strangely legendary shape. The law is said to have been utterly destroyed. Not a copy of it remained. It was given to Ezra, by special inspiration, to remember the whole of it, and to dictate to five scribes. They wrote for forty days on the box-wood tablets. And at the end of their labour some were to be made public, *e.g.*, the canonical books of the Old Testament, seventy were to be reserved, with their mysterious visions, for the initiation of a few (2 Esdras xiv.).*

Leaving these wilder tales, we may return to what Ezra actually was, and the state of things in which he had grown up. It is clear, from the list given in Ezra viii. of those who accompanied him to Jerusalem, that the Babylonian Jews must have been a numerous and influential body, that many Levites and priestly Nethinim and singers, had remained there. And it lies in the nature of things, that such a population must have had some systematic means for maintaining the religion of their fathers. The organization of the synagogue, destined to exercise so great an influence on the later history of Judaism, and through it on the constitution and ritual of the church, must have had, if not its origin, at all events its further development, among the exiles at Babylon. And

belonging to the age of the Maccabees, it will follow that the present Pentateuchal division of the Psalter, and therefore the arrangement of the whole, must have been of later date still.

* In 2 Esdras xiv. 44, the number of the books given is 204. There is, however, a various reading giving 94; and if this be accepted, then the books that were to be published are reduced to 24, the precise number of the books of the Old Testament, reckoning, as the Jews commonly did, the twelve minor prophets and the five Books of Moses as severally single books.

the narrative implies also that the Babylonian Jews were in frequent communication with their brethren in Jerusalem. What Ezra heard of the evils that were showing themselves there stirred in him the impulse to take up the work of a reformer. He obtains a decree from the Persian king, based upon the precedent of those of Cyrus and Darius. He goes with an authoritative commission from Artaxerxes and his seven chief counsellors. He has the gifts which they offer to the "God of Israel," whom they identify with the "God of heaven" that their forefathers had worshipped. He receives for himself and his companions the promise of immunity from all forms of taxation. He is made almost, as it were, a satrap of the province of Syria, with power to appoint judges and inferior magistrates, and to punish offenders with confiscation, or exile, or imprisonment, or death.

There are two noticeable features in the list of those who joined him in his undertaking. (1) As one of the leaders of the expedition, we have again the name of a son of David, but of one only. It may be inferred that other members of the royal line continued to remain as among the princes of the captivity.* It may also be inferred, with some probability, that the sons of Zerubbabel had not inherited their father's virtues, and that the support of another representative of the family was wanted for the reform which Ezra had undertaken. (2) We are struck by the unwillingness of the Levites to join in the work which was initiated and directed

* The belief that the house of David was thus represented among the Babylonian Jews is confirmed by the tradition that Hillel, the great scribe, who came from Babylon, belonged to it.

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by the heads of the priesthood. The fact seems to indicate that the interests of the two sections of the national clerisy were becoming antagonistic. The Levites at Babylon, where no sacrifices could be offered and no incense burnt, stood practically on a level with the priesthood, perhaps, as having a higher culture in minstrelsy and the work of scribes were held in greater honour. At Jerusalem, they would sink back to their old position as subordinate ministers of the temple. So it was, at any rate, when the travellers gathered on the banks of the Euphrates, at Ahava, no "sons of Levi" were to be found among them. It was not till an urgent message was sent that any came to join the caravan and then only thirty-eight answered to the summons, bringing with them, however, by way of compensation, two hundred and twenty Nethinim, descendants, *i.e.*, of the old Gibeonites and others who had been consecrated to an hereditary bondage, slaves attached to the Tabernacle, the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" of Joshua ix. 27.

When the travellers were all assembled, Ezra proclaimed a solemn fast, and they offered up prayer for a safe journey. The gifts of gold and silver and bronze were placed under the special guardianship of the most trusted priests, and on the twelfth day after their first meeting they started on their way. In less than four months afterwards they reached Jerusalem. The gifts were presented. The returning exiles offered their sacrifices, and then Ezra entered on his work. The full extent of the evil was brought before him. The nation was lapsing into heathenism. People, priests, Levites, were intermarrying with the idolatrous races round the

and adopting their customs. The protest of Ezra was delivered after the fashion of the East. In the sight of all the people, in the court of the Temple, he rent his clothes and tore the hair of his head and his beard, and sat "as one astonished," in a trance of horror (Ezra ix. 4). The rain fell on him in torrents, yet he continued motionless. The report of what he had done spread through the city. Crowds flocked to see and waited to hear. At last, towards sunset, at the hour of the evening sacrifice, when the precincts of the Temple were filled with worshippers, he rose, and once more rending his garments, uttered what was at once a prayer and a denunciation, condemning the evils which had filled him with such dismay, stirring up the people to turn away from it. His own confessions woke an echo in the hearts of the people. They joined in his weeping and lamentation. The rain that threatened to deprive them of their harvests was regarded as a divine judgment on their offences, and gave weight to Ezra's words (Ezra x. 9). It was resolved that there should be a solemn assembly of all the citizens of Judah, and that absence should involve the penalty of the confiscation of their property. The assembly met to ratify the foregone conclusion. Four men were appointed as commissioners to do what may be described as a work of censorship, to detect the cases of mixed marriages, which the reforming party were resolved to crush, and to insist on their being annulled. The priests, including the sons of Joshua, the Levites, the princes who had contracted such marriages, to the number of one hundred and nine, came forward to put away their wives. The latter probably returned to the protection of their

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own kinsmen, but the historian does not think worth his while to take notice of their fate.

At this stage the memoir in which Ezra relates his own work abruptly closes, and we hear nothing of him until he appears twelve years later (B.C. 445) in company with Nehemiah. What became of him during the interval? The state in which Nehemiah found Jerusalem, the revival of the laxities against which Ezra had protested, the apparent newness of his work as a teacher described in Nehemiah v. 1-10 seem to exclude the possibility of his having continued to reside there. We are driven to fall back upon the supposition that his commission was temporary one, and that he returned to Babylon with the conviction that its purpose had been accomplished. We have now to inquire under what circumstances he was summoned to return to it.

Of the lineage of Nehemiah we have no record beyond the fact that he was the son of Hachabiah and that the "sepulchres of his fathers" were in Jerusalem (Neh. ii. 5). The latter fact justifies the inference that he belonged to the tribe of Judah, but the absence of any genealogy all but excludes the possibility of his having been descended, as has been conjectured, from the royal or priestly line. He had found employment at Susa as the king's cupbearer, and had gained the favour of his master Artaxerxes the Long-handed. He, too, heard, from his brother Hanani and others who had come from Jerusalem, of the state of the Jews there, and of the desolation of the city. He mourned and fasted and prayed in secret. His sadness drew the notice of the king, and he inquired its cause. He learnt that the heart of his attendant was in the city where he

fathers slept, that he was grieved at its continued desolation. The petition that he might be allowed to go to Jerusalem with authority to remedy the evils which distressed him, met with a ready compliance, subject to the condition of his returning after a given time (Neh. ii. 6). He went with an escort and with a letter enabling him to come upon the keeper of the king's forests for the supply of whatever timber he might want. The news of his journey reached the ears of the old foes of Israel, the Moabites and Ammonites, and they determined to do what in them lay to thwart him. The former were represented by Sanballat the Horonite,* who seems to have occupied the position of a satrap in Samaria; the latter by Tobiah, who appears from the way in which the epithet "slave" is attached to his name, to have risen from that *status* to the rank of a chief counsellor in the government of the same province. He had contrived to form a party, cemented by a double marriage, among the nobles of Judah (Neh. vi. 18), and was, it may be, looking forward to making himself master of the city and ruling there at no distant day.

The cupbearer arrived at Jerusalem, waited for three days (the customary interval, it would seem, for purification after a journey), and then set forth, attended by a few companions, he alone mounted on horse or mule, on a night journey to survey the walls and gates which he was seeking to restore. We cannot follow him step by step in the details of his inspection, but the result fully confirmed all that he had heard of the wretchedly defenceless condition of the city, and strengthened his resolve

* The name is probably derived from the Moabite city, Horonaim.

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to undertake its restoration. He called together the priests and nobles, and laid his plans before them. It is significant of the state of things which he had to deal, that Sanballat and Tobi with Geshem, an Arabian ally, were actually at Jerusalem at the time, and tried to frighten the people with the assertion that their rebuilding of the walls would be looked upon as an act of rebellion against the Persian king. The work went on, however, in spite of their opposition, and in the document (Neh. iii.), on which the researches of the Palestine Exploration Society may possibly be for long cast some light, we have an official record of the extent and distribution of the work, with the fullest topographical minuteness. The progress of the work led to more open opposition. Sanballat and Tobiah, who had withdrawn from Jerusalem, were joined by the Samaritans, and by the inhabitants of at least one of the cities of the Philistines, and threatened an attack. The citizens had to defend the works which they were in the act of raising, some fighting from the ramparts with spears and bows and shields, while others continued building. Even the builders had to do their work with sword in hand. The sound of the trumpet was to be the signal in case of attack, calling all from different parts of the city to rally to the defence. They had to keep on the watch all night (Neh. iv.).

So the walls rose, and the adversaries of Judah

* Ashdod seems about this time to have entered into special close relations with the population of Jerusalem. There was the risk of a hybrid race, half-Philistines and half-Jews (Neh. xiii. 24).

† It will be seen that I pass over the narrative of ch. v. belonging to a later period. This is one of the instances in which there has been a dislocation in the arrangement of the chapter. Ver. 14 shows that it belonged to Nehemiah's second visit.

were foiled in their attack. They then had recourse to stratagems. They invited Nehemiah to a conference at one of the neighbouring villages, hoping to get him into their power, and perhaps to assassinate him. Four times they sent messengers to him, and four times received the same answer: "He was engaged in a great work, and could not leave it." The fifth time the messenger came with an *open* letter (this, according to the habits of the East, was a deliberate slight), which was intended to frighten him. "It was rumoured that he meant to make himself a king; that he had prophets in his pay who were ready to proclaim him under that title. Would it not be well for him to seek safety in flight?" A prophet suborned by Sanballat and Tobiah told him that his life was in danger, and urged him to take refuge in the Temple, and remain within its precincts. The patriot hero refused to purchase his life by an act of cowardice which would have interfered with the completion of his work. Other prophets, and a prophetess named Noadiah, who apparently exercised an influence over the people like that of Huldah in the days of Josiah, thwarted him, and discouraged the people by their predictions of danger. There were no prophets, it would seem, working with him. The nobles who belonged to the party of Tobiah, some of whom may have had a special cause of quarrel against Nehemiah, as showing a manifest sympathy for the poor whom they oppressed, helped, as far as they could, to thwart him. Their attempts were, however, frustrated, and the wall was finished within fifty-two days of the time of commencement. The time allowed to Nehemiah for his work was, however, near its conclusion.



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He had to return to the court of Artaxerxes resume his duties there.* He did what he could appointing his brother Hanani and another, possibly also a kinsman, over the city, with strict charge to close the gates at night, and to take all possible precautions against a sudden attack. Before departure he took a census of the people, taking as a basis that which had been made at the time of Zerubbabel's return.† In the exercise of a general censorship he excluded from the register of the priesthood those who could not give satisfactory proof of their descent from Aaron, and reserved the decision of the doubtful question to the indefinite distant period when there should once again rise a priest with the Urim and Thummim. He left Jerusalem with the feeling that he had not come there in vain, that the city could now hold its own against its enemies, and that sufficient provision had been made for the maintenance of the Temple ritual.

Twelve years seem to have intervened between his first visit and his second, and of these we have no detailed account. It is clear, however, that an open attack was made on the recently constructed walls. It is equally clear that Tobiah and Sanballat

* This is distinctly stated in ch. xiii. 6. The only question where we are to place the events of ch. viii.—xii. Looking to the character of ch. vii. as giving the arrangements made for the government of the city during his absence, and to the startling abruptness with which ch. viii. begins, it seems most natural to suppose that the gap comes between them, and that ch. v., which belongs to the second visit, has been, by some accident, transposed from its right place.

† The case was a remarkable one in its connection with the old history of Israel. The excluded priests bore the name of the house of Barzillai, the Gileadite chieftain who had received David with such princely hospitality, and whose daughter had married a priest.

continued their intrigues, and strengthened their party within the city. Eliashib, the high priest,* connected himself in some way with the former, and his son married the daughter of the latter. The Ammonite slave had a chamber prepared for him in the courts of the Temple, as though he had been a prophet or a priest. The usurious extortion of the nobles became more and more intolerable (Neh. v. 1—5). The priests apparently monopolized the tithes and other offerings that flowed into the treasury of the Temple, and the Levites and singers, defrauded of their share, refused to do their work (Neh. xiii. 10). Once again, after eleven years had passed, Nehemiah had to apply to Artaxerxes for permission to visit the city of his fathers. On this occasion we may infer, so far as we can see our way at all through the scanty and misplaced records, that he travelled by way of Babylon, found Ezra there, took counsel with him, invited his co-operation, and went on with him to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they commenced the work of reformation. Nehemiah gained the hearts of the people by a splendid hospitality maintained, not, as was customary, at the cost of the province, but at his own. One hundred and fifty Jews were entertained daily, besides foreigners. He stopped the exactions which the slaves and underlings of provincial governors so frequently practise. He expended part of his income in purchasing the freedom of Jews who had been

It is noticeable that Eliashib nowhere appears as taking any part in the measures of religious reform that were carried on by Ezra and Nehemiah. He is the high priest, and yet his name is not appended to the solemn league and covenant of ch. x. He was manifestly a partisan of the Sanballat and Tobiah party, an advocate of mixed marriages and lax discipline.

sold to the heathen. With the influence and authority which these acts gave him he appealed to the nobles of Judah to follow his example, to give up the usury which they had demanded (the rate had been 12 per cent.), to restore the fields and vineyards which had been mortgaged to them, and to release the Israelites, male and female, whom they had seized in satisfaction of their claims. It was a demand like that which Solon, according to the commonly received account, made at Athens upon the nobles there, like that which the *plebs* insisted on at Rome; but either the weight of his name or the dread of something worse led the nobles to comply with the self-denying ordinance. In the presence of priests and people they took a solemn oath, confirmed by a solemn anathema on whosoever should break it, that they would change their ways. They renounced altogether their claims upon their debtors. The measure seems, of course, somewhat violent in its character, but, like its Roman and Athenian analogues, it probably had its justification in the high rate of interest that had been exacted for many years, and which it may be, in most cases, exceeded the original debt.

In what follows the influence of Ezra is more distinctly traceable. He had gone on at Babylon with his work as a scribe, and had with him a complete copy of the Law written in the old Hebrew of the earlier days of the monarchy.* It is clear that during his absence there had been no systematic teaching of the people. There were as yet no scribes or teaching priests. So on the first day of the

* Probably, however, in the new, square character which was henceforth to be recognised as Hebrew.

seventh month the people were called together to hear the teacher who had come from Babylon, and they listened to him eagerly, as he, mounted on a high platform, or pulpit, read out the Law in the old speech of their fathers, while the Levites who were around him repeated it in the Aramaic, which had become the spoken language of the people. The first emotion of the people, as in the time of Josiah, was one of alarm and grief—"They wept when they heard the words of the law." The two reformers had, however, the wisdom to restrain this feeling. They felt that it was better to lead their countrymen in the first instance to the brighter side of a complete adherence to the religion of their fathers. The day was holy to the Lord, and was not a time for sorrow and lamentation. They were to "eat and drink, and send portions, and make great mirth," in their joy at the recovery of a treasure which they had lost so long (Neh. viii. 9—12). It would seem as if what they read in the Law as to the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles fell on their ears as something new either as to the form or degree of the rejoicing which accompanied it, and they determined that they would celebrate it, as it had not been celebrated within the memory of man. Never, the historian bears record, since the days of Joshua the son of Nun had such a feast been kept. With branches of palm, and olive, and pine, and myrtle, they made huts, or booths, on the flat roofs of their houses, in the open area of their court-yards, in the precincts of the Temple. And day by day, during the whole feast, the work of instruction went on in the same way.*

* The Feast of Tabernacles was, it will be remembered, the appointed season at which, in the Sabbatical year, the law was to

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The labours of Ezra were indefatigable. At the time came when those labours were to bear their fruit. The joy of the feast was over. There was a solemn meeting of the people for repentance and confession. Ezra is still their guide and teacher. In a prayer which was also a sermon, he summed up the past history of the Israelites, with all its sins on their part, its mercies on the part of God, and the name of the people confessed their manifold transgressions. So he led them to that which he and his colleague had in view, and the prince and priests, and Levites, and people, entered into an agreement with each other and with Jehovah. The document with the names attached to it is itself interesting enough (Neh. x. 1—27). To make it will have a yet deeper interest as the obvious pattern upon which the *Solemn League and Covenant* that played so conspicuous a part in our own nation's history was deliberately based. It went straight to the evils which Ezra and Nehemiah were most anxious to remedy. It forbade intermarriage with the heathen, trading on the Sabbath, the exacting of usury. It bound those who joined in it to make a small but fixed contribution (one-third of a shekel) to the maintenance of the Temple ritual, to secure to the Levites and priests, as well as to the singers, their share in the tithes and the first-fruits offerings. The zeal thus quickened into action showed itself in other ways. Jerusalem was as yet but thinly peopled, and its inhabitants were too few to defend it. The majority of those who had grown

be read aloud in the hearing of the people (Deut. xxxi. 10—11). The practice had, probably, fallen into disuse long before the captivity, perhaps had never been observed systematically at all.

up since the first return from Babylon preferred residing on their lands and in their villages. It was necessary to cast lots that one man in ten should take up his abode in the holy city. Those who volunteered for the arduous duty were counted worthy of special honour. The time was now come when Nehemiah could look upon his work as completed. The walls and gates were ready for a solemn dedication. Priests with trumpets, Levites with musical instruments of various form and use, singers in two great bands, were gathered on the walls and in the open spaces of the gates, and women and children joined in the strain, and once more (this time with no discordant wailing to mar its harmony) "the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off" (Neh. xii. 48).

By these successive steps the people were led on to the measures which Nehemiah and Ezra had in view, and by which they were able to obtain a decisive victory over their opponents. The law which enacted that no Ammonite or Moabite should enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation (Deut. xxiii. 3), was solemnly read to the people. The recent league and covenant bound them to carry it into execution. It had the effect of striking off the register of citizens all who were the offspring of the mixed marriages that had been recently contracted. The scene which had been witnessed was re-enacted at the time of Ezra's first visit. The Jews who had married wives of Ashdod, and of Ammon, and of Moab, whose children spoke a mongrel dialect, which the citizens of purer blood could not or would not understand, were anathematized, reviled, outraged, as transgres-

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sors of the Law.* But it was not at the mean crowd that the blow was chiefly aimed. The high priest, who had connected himself with the party opposed to the measures of the reformers, was the offender whom they meant to punish through the new zeal of the people. One of his grandsons had married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonath. Tobiah, through his marriage with the daughter Meshullam, probably a priest, was also connected with him, and had, as has been noticed above, been allowed to instal himself in one of the chambers of the Temple. Nehemiah was determined to take no half-measures. The transgressing priest was expelled from his office, and fled to Sanballat to revenge himself, it may be, by laying the foundations of the rival worship on Mount Gerizim, where under another Sanballat, and another fugitive priest, rose some hundred years later into prominence. Tobiah, with all his goods and chattels, was turned out of the residence which his presence had decorated. Other reforms followed rapidly on the heels of these. Measures were taken for security to the Levites and the singers the payment of which they had been defrauded by the rapacity of the priests. A board of finance, representing

* The description, in its details, is painful enough. "I attended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, plucked off their hair" (Neh. xiii. 25); but it must be judged by an eastern, not a western standard, and ecclesiastical history presents but too many parallels to it.

† Josephus is our only authority as to the later Sanballat (Antiq. xi. 8). He represents the apostate priest as bearing the name of Manasseh, marrying the daughter of the Samaritan king and establishing the rival worship, and places this in the time of Alexander the Great. The whole story has, however, somewhat of a legendary character. So far as it goes, it implies the previous existence of a cultus of some kind, though not of a temple on Gerizim.

apparently, priests, and scribes, and Levites, and laymen, was appointed to prevent like abuses for the future (Neh. xiii. 13). All Sabbath labour was prohibited within the walls of the city. The gates were closed from the sunset of Friday to that of Saturday. The Tyrian dealers in fish, the tillers of the soil who brought their figs and grapes for sale, tried to hold a market outside the gates in the hope of catching malcontents or stragglers, but were foiled by more vigorous measures of police. The Levites were summoned from their usual work as watchmen of the Temple to take their station as sentinels at the gates of the city.

With the record of these successes the Book of Nehemiah ends. As with the full conviction that he had done his utmost, he closes his memoir with the prayer, which is half a boast, "Remember me, O my God, for good." He could look back upon his work during its whole course, with the feeling that it had been tainted by no mean ambition, no grasping self-aggrandisement. He had, from first to last, declined, in the spirit which led St. Paul afterwards to refuse the wages of his Apostleship, to eat "the bread of the governor," the public provision, *i.e.*, for his maintenance, and had entertained rich and poor with a large-handed hospitality (Neh. v. 14—19). Out of his private resources he had purchased the freedom of many of his countrymen who had been reduced to slavery. If we accept the statement of the Second Book of Maccabees, in itself probable enough, he had added to these services, following, it may be, the counsels of Ezra, that of founding a library, in which he gathered together "the acts of the kings, and the prophets, and of

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David, and the Epistles of the [Persian] kings concerning the holy gifts" (2 Macc. ii. 13). His writings and commentaries must have furnished the materials out of which, with other documents at some later period, the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah assumed their present form. A most legendary tradition in the same book runs to the effect that it was through him that the Jews regained their possession of the sacred fire. Devoted priests, it was said, at the time of the captivity, had taken the fire of the altar and hid it in a cask without water. The secret of the hiding-place had been handed down from father to son. When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, he sent those who knew it, and they found no fire, but only "thick water. But the water itself, like that which Elijah had poured on Carmel, seemed to change its nature. The sun shone on it, and it kindled into a flame first on the altar itself, then on the stones that encompassed it (2 Macc. i. 19—36).

It is impossible to read the account of the work done by the two men whose lives have formed the subject of this paper without the feeling that history does sometimes reproduce itself. One instance of such parallelism I have pointed out in the analogy between the covenant into which Nehemiah and Ezra persuaded the more zealous portion of the people to enter, and that which in A.D. 1638 marked a great crisis in the history of Scotland, and became at once a watchword and a nickname for generations. Another must present itself, I believe, to every one who reads the history of Calvin's sway—one might almost say, his government—at Geneva. There is the same zeal, the same nobleness of purpose, the

same concentration of indignant anger at what seemed violations of the law of God, something too, it must be added, of the same spirit of jealous exclusiveness in both. What mixed marriages were in the one case, leanings to Rome, or to the wild Socinianism of Servetus, or to general laxity of morals, were in the other. In each there was a long struggle with the intrigues of opposing parties crowned by ultimate success. In each the work was wanting in the wider thoughts, the far-sighted freedom which alone can secure permanence. In each, therefore, the reform was followed by a reaction. Old evils once again re-appeared, in their old form, or but slightly disguised. New evils, the inevitable growth of the defects of the reform itself, mingled with them. What the nature of those evils were in the older history, with what unavailing protests the last of the prophets tried to stem them, we shall see when we come to take a survey of the book of *MALACHI*.

XIII.

THE LAST OF THE PROPHETS.

THE narrative of the closing historical book of the Old Testament connects itself, as we have said, with that of the last of the prophets, and cannot be fully understood without studying its contents. Unhappily there is no prophet in the whole history of Israel of whom we know so little. It is doubtful whether the name which is prefixed to the book was really borne by the writer, or merely describes his function as the "messenger of Jehovah."* In the Greek version of the Old Testament the proper name disappears from the opening verse, and the common noun takes its place. In that which is known as the Targum, or Paraphrase of Jonathan, the prophet is identified with Ezra. Jewish traditions represent him as one of the hundred and twenty who composed the Great Synagogue, the companion of Haggai, and Zechariah and Zerubbabel.

Some points as to the date at which he wrote can, however, be made out with tolerable certainty. (1.) The whole book presupposes the completion of the second Temple, and the restoration of the old ritual.

* "Malachi" itself is equivalent to "my messenger," but it was probably contracted from the fuller form *Malachiah*, and this would have the meaning given in the text.

and it must therefore be later than the first twenty years after the return from Babylon. The absence of the name of Malachi from the list of those who then returned is, of course, explained in this way, and would have been startling had one who was so conspicuous had any claim to have appeared in it. (2.) The *consensus* of late critics has made the prophet a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah, chiefly on the ground that he protests, as they did, against the evils of mixed marriages (Mal. ii. 11, 12) and the sins of the priesthood. It is, however, difficult, on this hypothesis, to explain the total absence of Malachi's name from the memoirs of those two writers. Had he been working then, his name would probably have been as prominent as those of Haggai and Zechariah had been in the earlier stages of the Return of the Exiles. If he was doing his work as a prophet at the time, he must have been one of their chief friends and fellow-workers. It is more probable, on grounds of which the reader may judge, that he lived in the generation that immediately followed them.

(I.) The name Malachi (= Malachiah) means, as has been said, "the messenger of Jehovah." As every Hebrew name, with hardly an exception, embodied some religious thought or feeling, there is no reason why this, like so many others formed after the same pattern, should not have been that of an individual man. But it throws some light on the fact that it was given to him in his childhood, to remember that the title had been claimed by one of the two great prophets who immediately preceded him. Haggai (i. 13) had described himself as "the messenger of Jehovah." The name became, perhaps

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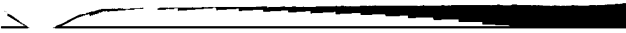
then for the first time, perhaps as the revival of older nomenclature,* the synonyme of prophet. It is fair to infer from this fact that when it was bestowed upon the child who was to be known by it hereafter it was with the thought that he was dedicated to that work, that his father, if not Haggai himself, was one who came under the personal influence of that prophet, that the boy was trained as his disciple.

(II.) It is clear too, on a comparison of the prophecy and the history, that the former paints a more advanced stage of corruption and decay than we find in Ezra and Nehemiah. Weak and wicked as the sons and grandsons of Josedek might be, intermarrying with the heathen, holding back from the Law and Covenant of the true worshippers, what we read in Malachi speaks of a more hopeless degeneration, more pervading hypocrisy. The prophet who had hardly have spoken, while Ezra the priest was doing his great work as a scribe, as he does when he speaks of something that was altogether past, that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth" (Mal. ii. 7). A large number of the priests and Levites are found working faithfully with Nehemiah, joining in the covenant dealing honestly with first-fruits and tithes. The impression left by the history is not that of a time in which the priests had already "made the tabernacle of the Lord contemptible," in which they "had ruptured the covenant," and were made "contemptible and base" (Mal. ii.).

(III.) We may, I believe, go further. The vision of the prophet was not conceived in the same spirit as that of the scribe and the ruler. They

* Comp. the "Angel of the Lord" in Judges ii. 1; v. 20.

satisfied with the reforms that they had effected, gave God thanks that they had seen the fruit of their labours, tried to intensify the spirit of an exclusive nationality, even at the cost of breaking up the life of the family and cancelling the sacred ties of marriage. He was taught to see that there was an evil very close at hand in connection with all this, perhaps inseparable from it. While it was sustained by the true-hearted zeal and devotion of men like Ezra and Nehemiah, the good might overbalance the evil. When it was left to the control of an ignorant and corrupt priesthood, the evil gained the mastery. And so in the last of the prophets we have another example of that which a comparison of the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament so often shows us. The historian praises, or narrates without a word of censure. The prophet comes with a clearer insight and deeper wisdom, and records his protest against what had been looked upon as calling only for admiration. So the massacre of the house of Ahab and the worshippers of Baal appears in 2 Kings ix., x., as an instance of the "zeal for Jehovah" which Jehu displayed, and which was rewarded by the promise of the throne of Israel to himself and his children for four generations. And yet, when Hosea entered on his work as a prophet, his first utterance was to condemn the treachery and cruelty with which that zeal had been mingled—"Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (Hosea i. 4). So, as we read the Books of Kings and Chronicles, the reign of Hezekiah seems to be, from beginning to end, a time of national reformation. Religion is re-established, the Temple of the Lord is crowded



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with worshippers, there has not been such devotion since the days of David. Isaiah shows us that though this was a true representation of one side of the picture, there was another and a very different side. The people were "laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers" (i. 4). Their princes were "rebels and companions of thieves" (i. 23). Their "iniquity was an abomination," their "new moons and pointed feasts" were hateful to Jehovah (i. 13, 14).

A like contrast between the view of the historian and the teaching of the prophet is to be found, if I mistake not, in the instance now before us. It presents many striking features. (1.) One of the works on which Nehemiah looked back with most satisfaction was that he had secured to the Levites the payment of a sufficient remuneration for their work. It was a right thing in itself. He asserted what we have learnt to call the principle of an "established" church, and of a fair division of income. But that spirit might easily pass, and he actually passed, into the temper which is always clamorous for rights and privileges, which will win only when those rights and privileges are secured. The spirit of the hireling takes the place of that of the worshipper. And so, amongst the foremost aims which the prophet is called on to condemn we find this, noted with special reference to the functions of those Levites over whose interests Nehemiah had been so watchful. "Who is there even among you," he asks, "that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts; neither will I accept an offering at your hand" (Mal. i. 10). And the hireling spirit, once fostered

showed itself, as it always does, in neglect, evasion, dishonesty. The priests offered at the altar of the Lord the "lame, the blind, and the sick," wretched beasts which they would not have dared to present to the Persian satrap. They offered "polluted bread" upon the altar, and so they made the table of the Lord contemptible.

(2.) Not less striking is the spirit of catholicity to which Malachi gives utterance at a time when the priests and scribes were stiffening into the most exclusive nationality. Something of this is seen, as I have pointed out elsewhere,* in the Divine name which he proclaims with such reiterated emphasis, "The Lord of hosts." In Ezra and Nehemiah that name does not appear at all. We have, instead of it, "our God," "the God of our fathers," "the Lord God of Israel," and the like. The name which was so significant of wider sympathies and hopes, appears not less than twenty times in the four short chapters of Malachi. But this was not all. It was given to the last of the prophets to proclaim with an entirely new distinctness, not only as Isaiah had done, the accession of Gentile proselytes to the worship and the faith of Israel, but the acceptance of their worship wherever it might be offered. If we remember that the form of heathenism with which the prophet had come most closely into contact was that of the followers of Zoroaster, and that it was an express part of their ritual that sacrifices might be offered by any one and anywhere, it is not too much to say that he had been led to see a truth underlying the corruptions of that creed, which would one day coalesce with the truth which the corruptions of the

* Comp. the Study on "The Lord of Sabaoth" in this volume.

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creed of Israel were stifling, and become the starting point of a new and better dispensation. "From rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts (Mal. i. 11). Of all anticipations of higher truth which meet us in the Old Testament, there is none which approximates so closely as this does to the higher revelation which proclaimed that neither on the mountain of Samaria, nor in the Temple of Jerusalem, should men worship the Father, as in an exclusive sanctuary, that the hour was come "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John iv. 21—23).

(3.) But there remains another and yet more striking contrast between the teaching of the prophet and the spirit in which Ezra and Nehemiah acted. They had dwelt with reiterated vehemence on the sin of intermarrying with idolaters, on the duty of divorcing wives of heathen parentage. They record with exultation the number of women who were thus separated from their husbands. He renews, as clearly as they do, the sin of Judah in naming "the daughter of a strange god." Those who contracted such marriages had profaned the covenant of the Lord, and the sentence went forth against them, "The Lord will cut off the man that doeth the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacle of Jacob" (Mal. ii. 11, 12). But it will be noticed that the prophet introduces a limitation. His "daughter of a strange god" is one who is actually an i

treachery, and there could be no hope for purity and truth in the children of one who continued to be a votary of Chemosh or of Ashtaroah. He deliberately chooses an expression which does not exclude the legitimacy of such a marriage when the wife, though a heathen in race, was a convert to the faith of Israel. But the strong measures to which the scribe and the governor had recourse were followed, justifiable as they might seem at first, by an aftergrowth of evil. A ground of divorce was introduced of which men of hard and selfish natures were not slow to take advantage. They contracted the forbidden marriages, treated the heathen wife, so long as they chose to live with her, as a proselyte to Judaism, and then, when they were weary of her, repudiated her on the ground of her Gentile blood.* The thing was done systematically, and was breaking down all the sanctities of the life of home. The priests, in their formal, hypocritical zeal, treated this case and the other as standing on the same footing. The divorced and abandoned wives went to the courts of the Temple "with tears, with weeping, and with crying." Their wail of lamentation mingled with the prayers and hymns of the sacrificing priests. How could the Lord "regard the offering any more, or accept it at their hands," when attended by such accompaniments?

It was under such circumstances that Malachi entered on his work, against such evils that he protested. To him this facility for multiplying divorces seemed the most fatal sign of an irretrievable cor-

* It is right to mention the other hypothesis, that Malachi is speaking of the practice of repudiating wives of Israelitish birth, in order to marry women of Gentile origin. It does not seem, however, so probable as that given in the text.

ruption. When the priests, in their blindness and hardness, confessed themselves unable to understand why their offering was thus rejected, he makes answer as with fiery indignation, "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness against thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." In the case, *i.e.*, which the prophet had in view, the marriage retained all its natural sanctity. The wife was the divinely appointed "companion" or helpmate of the husband. She had entered with him into a "covenant" with the Lord of hosts (Mal. ii. 14, 15).

The words which follow are abrupt and difficult, but, rightly interpreted, they will be found, if I mistake not, to point to a profound truth. "Did not ONE make them?" Is not the same Lord the Creator of the husband and the wife? Does not the "residue of the spirit," *i.e.*, the whole spiritual life in all its special relationships, belong to Him? What is He, the ONE, seeking? What but "a seed of God," a righteous progeny? Therefore, because marriage is so divine a thing, resting on such sacred sanctions, "take heed to your spirit" (that spirit which is given to man and woman alike), "and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." When a man puts away his wife because of hate, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, "he covers his garment with violence" (he is polluted, *i.e.*, not sanctified, by such a repudiation). "Therefore take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously." So taken, the words contained, as I have said, a protest against a growing evil. But the protest was uttered in vain. The tendency to

multiplied divorces went on increasing under the hands of priests and scribes. Even the wisdom of the son of Sirach (*Ecclus.* xxv. 13—26), when he comes to speak of marriage and its perils, passes into a cynical bitterness, like that of the darkest phase of thought depicted in *Ecclesiastes* as following on Solomon's life of sensual indulgence, and he has no other counsel to give to a husband who finds that his marriage has been a mistake than to advise him to extricate himself from it with the least possible delay. "If she go not as thou wouldst have her, cut her off from thy flesh, and give her a bill of divorce and let her go." Even the School of Hillel, in other respects approximating to the higher ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, was on this point singularly lax. When the teacher came who was himself that Messenger or Angel of the Covenant whom Malachi had foretold, it was to proclaim in words which rested on the same deep eternal truth as those of the prophet: "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female? . . . Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (*Matt.* xix. 4—6).

(IV.) Not less significant, as containing the germ of what was afterwards to be developed, is the indication given by Malachi of the growth of something like a brotherhood or order, not claiming or professing the inspiration of the older schools of the prophets, not entering, as they had done, on any vigorous effort at correcting the corruptions that were eating into the nation's life, but bearing a silent witness by lives of holiness and devotion, associated

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by the bonds of prayer and mutual love, hand down from generation to generation the tradition of higher truths and better hopes. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name" (iii. 16). Such in the period that followed were the Chasidim, or Brothers of Mercy, in whom Judas the Maccabee found most trustworthy supporters; such in the time of the New Testament, though not mentioned in it, were the Essenes, who by the shores of the Dead Sea and elsewhere passed their time in labour and prayer and exhibited in their social organization the pattern of a devout communism. Such, with even a closer resemblance, were those of whom St. Luke speaks who were just and devout, and "waiting for consolation of Israel," who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 25, 38), brooding on Messianic hopes which had indeed been proclaimed by earlier prophets, but to which the last of the goodly fellowship had set his attesting seal in his final utterances.

And it is not too much to say that the form which those expectations were fulfilled was determined, in no small measure, by that utterance. The words which then for the first time spoke of the re-appearance of "Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. iv. 5), must have been brought to the mind of Zacharias when he heard, in the vision of the Temple, that the son whose birth was then announced to him should go before the Lord "in spirit and power of Elias" (Luke i. 17). When

Baptist entered on his work as a preacher of repentance, sweeping away the hypocrisies and traditions of Pharisees and Sadducees, bringing out of his treasure things new and old, reproducing the earliest fundamental truths of the faith of Abraham, and giving his sanction to the hopes of a better age, after which the young and ardent were aspiring, what words could so well describe his office as those which had told of one who should "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers?" (Mal. iv. 6.) The very words of the "forerunner" as he preached to the people—"The axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. . . . He will gather his wheat into his garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 10, 12), were a substantial, all but a verbal, reproduction of those of Malachi, "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. iv. 1). The words of the song of Zacharias, which spoke of the "tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us" (Luke i. 78), were but an echo of the older prophecy, "Unto you that fear the Lord shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. iv. 2). Even without the statement of the evangelist (Mark i. 12), and the express attestation of our Lord (Matt. xi. 10), there would have been enough to lead every thoughtful reader to the conclusion that the Baptist did indeed embody

all that had been predicted of the "messenger" who should be "sent to prepare the way" before the higher Messenger of the Covenant, who was to come suddenly to his temple (Mal. iii. 1), that he was indeed the Elijah that was to come (Matt. xvii. 11), and that all the dreams of earlier and later Judaism as to a personal re-appearance upon earth of the Tishbite prophet were but fantastic dreams. Even the title which our Lord bestowed upon the chosen disciples as the "Apostles" whom He "sent" as delegates to do the prophetic work, which was claimed for Himself as the great Apostle or Delegate of his Father, was in part a reproduction of that name of "Messenger" to which Malachi, both personally and in his written prophecy, had given so new a prominence.

I have reserved to the last that which is perhaps the most striking of all the features of this prophet's work, the strange half-dramatic dialogue with which it opens. With a startling reiteration, after every specific denunciation of the sins of priests and people, they are represented as asking, as if in utter unconsciousness of their sin, "Wherein have we polluted Thee?" "Wherein have we despised Thy Name?" "Wherein have we wearied Him?" "Wherein shall we return?" They have fallen into the last stage of selfish formalism when conscience ceases to do its work as an accusing witness, into the hypocrisy which does not even know itself to be hypocritical, the hypocrisy, in other words, of the Scribes and Pharisees. Out of this there comes in some instances the denial of a righteous judgment here or hereafter, the cynical scorn of all efforts after a nobler life, which became characteristic of the

baser section of the Sadducees. Men said in their utter scepticism, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them. Where is the God of judgment?" (Mal. ii. 17.) The two tendencies were at work already which went on till there was no soundness left in the whole body spiritual of Israel according to the flesh. The people and their rulers had eyes and yet they saw not, ears and yet they heard not. The last of the prophets, as he ends his work, does it with the sense that the mission of his order is for a time over, that there must be a revival of it in some age more or less distant, accompanied by great and terrible changes that should sweep away much that had been held as venerable and holy, but leading to a time of refreshment from the presence of the Lord, to a purer worship and a wider sense of brotherhood.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Y



THE PROPHETS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

AN examination of the closing years of the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, like that suggested in the last paragraph of "*Old Age of Isaiah*"* presupposes a full knowledge of the history of the Apostolic Church than can be taken for granted in most readers. What is wanted is not merely a survey of the general broad facts of that history as we learn them from the Acts of the Apostles, or as they are stated in manuals and epitomes, but an insight into its inner life, clear pictures before our mind's eye of what men were doing, clear conceptions of what they were thinking and feeling, sympathy with their hopes and fears.

I. As embodying one of the most prominent facts in that inner life, and as being more than most others, forgotten or misconceived, while yet without it we can hardly get below the surface in studying the writings of the two Apostles I have named, I have chosen the subject which stands at the head of this paper, the Prophets of the New Testament. How indistinct our common notions about them may be shown, I believe, by a very simple test. C

* See p. 213.

the many thousands who hear and repeat the words that God "has built his Church upon the foundation of the *Apostles and Prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii. 20, and Collect for St. Simon and St. Jude in the Prayer-Book of the Church of England), there are probably very few, except among the professed students of Scripture, who do not at once think of the Prophets of the Old Testament as those spoken of. They picture to themselves the unity of the older and the newer dispensations, the "glorious company of the Apostles," Peter and John and Paul, and the others, joined with the "goodly fellowship of the Prophets," with Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, in a divine and everlasting brotherhood. And yet it is demonstrable to any thoughtful English reader that those men of God of the older days of Israel were not, and could not be, those of whom the Apostle spoke. In this very Epistle St. Paul counts up how and through what instruments God builds up his Church, and the order in which he places them is this: "Christ," he says, "ascended up on high, . . . and gave gifts unto men, . . . and He gave some Apostles, and some *Prophets*, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; . . . for the edifying (*sc.* the building up) of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11). This is in itself decisive. Both offices originate in gifts bestowed by the risen and ascended Lord. The familiar, oft-quoted words refer to the Prophets of the Christian, not to those of the Jewish Church. But this is not all. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians there is a like enumeration of spiritual gifts, and functions resting upon them, and the names occur there also in the same combination.

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"God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12. 28). Other instances confirming the inference that no further confirmation be needed, will meet us as we proceed further.

II. We may assume then, the existence of a class of men in the Apostolic Church, known as Prophets, and exercising prophetic functions. Leaving for the present moment, the question what those functions were, we shall gain something by getting a clear view of the extent both of the gift and of the order. This is indeed, in every way the most striking fact connected with it. Under the old covenant, they had been confined within comparatively narrow limits. I may think of "the sons of the Prophets" as something like a collegiate or monastic body, dwelling together, trained in music and song, and so prepared to receive divine revelations,* even they were few, and still fewer became recipients of the highest forms of inspiration. And for four hundred years even this had ceased, and the voice of the last mysterious "messenger of the Lord" (such is the signification of the name of the Prophet Malachi) had closed the canon of Old Testament prophecy. The people had even come to reckon the appearance of the Prophet as an epoch of remote chronology, and were looking forward anxiously to the time when one should be raised up to guide and teach them (1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27).

At last "the word of God came to John the Baptist in the wilderness" (Luke iii. 2), as it had come to Isaiah or Ezekiel. He appeared,

* Compare especially 1 Sam. x. 5; xix. 20—24; 2 Kings iv. 1. 1.

producing the old life in all its austerity, clad in the "rough garment" of a prophet (2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4) like Elijah, abstaining from wine like the Nazarites and Rechabites, living on locusts and wild honey like the wilder Arab tribes to which the Rechabites belonged. So it was that the people "counted John that he was a Prophet indeed" (Matt. xiv. 5; xxi. 26), while others said of him as men had said of the older prophets (Jer. xxix. 26), that he "had a devil and was mad" (Matt. xi. 18; compare John x. 20). So when the greater Teacher came, though the outward form of life was different, though he showed himself as the Master, the Teacher, a Rabbi like other Rabbis (John i. 49; xx. 16), there was this which, even apart from all signs and wonders, made men hold that "a great Prophet had risen up among them" (Luke vii. 16; xxiv. 19). He spake as never man spake (John vii. 46); as having power and "authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. vii. 29). But up to the day of Pentecost, these were the only two of whom this was said. No trace of this energy shows itself in the wayward, questioning, doubting disciples. But when that day had fully come there was a great and marvellous change. Over and above the mysterious gift of Tongues, with their thrilling notes, and ecstatic doxologies, and languages of many lands, there was the gift of Prophecy also. It was on this rather than on the other that St. Peter laid stress as fulfilling the old prediction, both in its wonderful power and yet more in its wonderful extent, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Young men and old, yea, even the lowest and most despised, were to share the gift.

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"On my servants (*i.e.*, slaves) and on my handmaids (*i.e.*, female slaves) will I pour out in those days my Spirit, and they shall prophesy" (Acts ii. 1). And from that time, it spread with a wonderful rapidity. Sometimes through the laying-on of Apostles' hands (Acts viii. 17; xix. 6), sometimes with no human intervention (Acts x. 44—45), the Spirit came upon men, and they spoke in tongues, and magnified God, and prophesied. Some of these became conspicuous enough to be named as Prophets in the higher sense of the word—Barnabas the son of consolation, or, as we might literally interpret the new name thus given to him, the Prophet of the Lord (Acts iv. 36); Stephen speaking with the Holy Ghost and with power, in the highest sense the word, a Prophet of the Lord (Acts vi. 10), and Agabus (Acts xi. 28; xxi. 10); and Silvanus, and Judas (Acts xv. 32); and Manaen the Lucian of Cyrene (Acts xiii. 1); and Timothy, bearing the old prophetic title of "man of God" (1 Tim. vi. 11; Deut. xxxiii. 1; 2 Kings iv. 7); the deacons of Philip the Evangelist (Acts xxi. 8); and among the greatest of them all, Saul of Tarsus, the Apostle of the Gentiles. But even more striking than the list of names is the abounding proof of the presence of the gift in every church of the Gentiles. At Thessalonica men are warned not to "quench the Spirit which kindled the power, nor "despise" the manifestations which flowed from it (1 Thess. v. 20). At Corinth its excess almost threatened disorder, and called for that full exhaustive discussion of it which more than any other portion of the New Testament gives us an insight into its nature (1 Cor. xii. 1—14). At Rome, even though as yet no Apostle

visited that church, it is presupposed, and the disciples are taught to "prophecy according to the proportion, or analogy of the faith" (Rom. xii. 6). At Ephesus, it stands all but highest in the list of the gifts with which Christ had endowed the Church (Eph. iv. 11). Strange as it may seem, there were in that age some hundreds, it may be thousands, of men as truly inspired as Isaiah or Jeremiah had been, as St. Peter and St. Paul were then, speaking words that were, as truly as any that were ever spoken, inspired words of God, and yet of most of them all record has vanished. Their voices smote the air, and did their work, and died away, and we catch but the faintest echoes of them. Their words were written on the sand, and the advancing waves of time have washed away all, or nearly all, traces of what was once as awful as the handwriting on the wall.

III. What then was the nature of the gift so widely spread; what purpose did it serve; how did it contribute to building up the Church?

(1.) It is obvious that the gift of Prophecy was very far from being identical with the gift of prediction. It had not been so in the Jewish Church, nor was it so in the Christian. Even as the Heathens used the word it meant something more than that. The Prophet was the spokesman of God, the man to whom the word of God came and who spoke it out with power. What St. Paul dwelt on most when he was speaking of the effects of prophecy was not that it enabled men to foretell things to come, but that by disclosing the secrets of their hearts it made them fall down and worship God (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). Outwardly the chief charac-

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teristic of the New Testament Prophet would to have been that he spoke burning words which went straight to men's hearts, that he proclaimed eternal truths which otherwise they would not know. We must not, however, think of the prophets as some have thought, as being only ear-impassioned, enthusiastic preachers, mere interpreters of Scripture, or asserters of moral laws. As preachers of righteousness, their power lay not in skill, or even in earnestness of speech, but in marvellous, supernatural insight which they possessed into the hearts of men. Inspired by the Divine Word, "before whom all things are naked and opened" (Heb. iv. 13), they too knew what was in men, and read their most secret thoughts. They could say to this one, "Thou art the man," "Vast hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart" (Acts v. 4), to that, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (John xx. 23). They could say to another, as in the case of Timotheus (1 Tim. i. 18), "Thou art called to preach the gospel of thy Lord. Thou shalt have the gift, do the work of an Evangelist," or, as at Antioch, the Spirit through them could say, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). So it was that "the secrets of men's hearts were made manifest" and that "men fell down on their faces, and worshipped God, and reported that God was of a truth present" with those who had so marvellous a power (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25).

(2.) But with this there was also, it must not be forgotten, a distinctly predictive power, not put forth indeed, for its own sake, as a prodigy and wonder like the art of a soothsayer and diviner, but con-

buting, like the other form of the gift, to build up the Church, or to strengthen the life of individual men, helping them to meet dangers which would otherwise have come upon them as a snare. Foresight of the famine that came upon the provinces of the Empire in the days of Claudius roused the Gentile Churches to active beneficence towards the poor Christians of Jerusalem, and so served to knit together the bonds of brotherhood between them (Acts xi. 27—30). Foresight of a persecution directed against an individual teacher helped to test his courage and endurance. So it was when at Tyre the disciples "said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (Acts xxi. 4); when Agabus warned him, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts xxi. 10—14). Utterances of this kind, we cannot doubt, are referred to when the Apostle tells the elders at Miletus that "the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city that bonds and afflictions abide him" (Acts xx. 23), when he warns Timotheus that "the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter days some shall depart from the faith" (1 Tim. iv. 1). In this instance it is interesting to note how the prophet reproduces the symbolic forms of those of an earlier age. Agabus took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, just as Jeremiah "buried his girdle by the hole of a rock in Euphrates" (Jer. xiii. 4—10), and appeared among the people with "bonds and yokes" upon his neck (Jer. xxvii. 2; xxviii. 10).

(3.) But beyond all special predictions that had a historical fulfilment within the horizon of their own age, the teaching of the Prophets of the New Testa-

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ment was essentially apocalyptic. As in that w
is pre-eminently the Apocalypse, their eyes v
opened to see the things behind the veil, and
ever new, inexhaustible theme of their discourse
“the power and coming” i.e., the second coming
the Lord Jesus” (2 Pet. i. 16). There was no r
for them to fix “times and seasons” as others h
done since, for the one thing which they knew c
cerning them was “that the day of the Lord
cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. v. 2).
that they could do was to point to a coming per
of undefined length, of apostasy, and lawless
and unbelief (2 Thess. ii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Pet. iii
after which should come the glory of the kingd
In speaking of that glory, they were as men see
the reflection of heavenly things in the mirro
their own minds, for they saw “as in a glass dark
and prophesied “in part only” (1 Cor. xiii. 9—
sometimes using outward symbols that were fig
of the true,—the heavenly Jerusalem, the paradis
God,—and yet sometimes also revealing to men n
teries that had been “hidden in silence since the
ginning of the world” (Rom. xvi. 25). Among t
mysteries one, and perhaps the most promin
was that of the brotherhood of mankind in Ch
that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of
same body (Eph. iii. 5, 6); or, again, the mys
of “Christ in them, the hope of glory” (Col. i.
To them it was given to see glimpses, hardly t
translated into words, of the “glory yet to
revealed,” the “manifestation of the sons of G
the *freedom of the glory* of his children (Rom.
13—21). Yes, in words which, if they are p
an echo of a prophecy of the Old Testament, are

also, it may be, taken from a prophetic utterance of the Apostolic Church, "as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).* The vision of that glory, lying in the far future, was to sustain the Church through all the long weariness of persecution, conflict, and the sickness of a hope deferred.

Such then were the Prophets, speaking in every church, at almost every meeting. Can we wonder that St. Paul should speak as he does, of such a gift as profitable "for edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3)? While Tongues were a sign only to those that believed not, startling and confounding them, Prophecy did the double work of convincing the unbelievers and building up the Church. While a man speaking in the full ecstasy of the Tongues might edify himself, by prophesying he edified the Church (1 Cor. xiv. 2—4). Can we wonder that they should occupy all but the foremost place in the Church of Christ, second only to the Apostles, hardly second even to them, seeing that the Apostles themselves were also Prophets; that the two names should be placed together, as we have seen them, the very order being interchangeable

* The words seem suggested by Isaiah lxiv. 4, "Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." On the other hand they are referred by Chrysostom to a lost apocryphal book ascribed to Elijah. Later critics have seen in them an extract from an Apostolic Liturgy. The hypothesis that they were part of a recorded (but no longer extant) "word of prophecy" that took its starting-point from the words of Isaiah seems, at least, as probable as any other.

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(2 Pet. iii. 2), in the closest juxtaposition? The thing we may be quite sure, that wherever storms of persecution fell, they would have to bear the brunt of it, just as Stephen, the foremost of the "goodly company," was also the proto-martyr of the Church. The ferocity which slew him was not to spare them. Many disciples, we know, were scourged and imprisoned (Acts viii. 3; xxii. 4) and were scattered from Jerusalem, except the Apostles (Acts viii. 1), and, although St. Luke does not detail the history of the persecution into detail, all that would lead us to think that some at least of those who had been most conspicuous perished in it. The greater is the probability that others besides John the son of Zebedee, became martyrs to the faith. Herod the king "stretched forth his hands to certain of the Church" (Acts xii. 1). So indeed had been foretold, in words which bear distinctly on this inquiry. The "Wisdom of God" spoken through the Incarnate Son, had brought the names together as we find them united in the Epistles, "I will send them *Prophets* and *Apostles* and some of them shall they slay and persecute" (Luke xi. 49). "Behold, I send unto you *Prophets* and wise men, and scribes; and some of them shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall scourge in your synagogues" (Matt. xxiii. 34). In these words, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest *Prophets*, and stonest them which are sent unto thee" (Matt. xxiii. 37), though present in their form predictive rather than historic, look to the future rather than to the past.

Traces of this lost page in the history of the Apostolic Church we find, I believe, in pas

which are commonly referred to a remoter period, but which receive, when thought of as belonging to the very age in which the writers lived, a clearer and more satisfying meaning. Of some such fiery trial it was that St. Paul wrote when he said of the Jews of Judæa that they "both killed the Lord Jesus, and *their own Prophets*" (1 Thess. ii. 15). The steadfast endurance of those martyrs it was that St. James held up to the Twelve Tribes that were scattered abroad, as a pattern. "Take, my brethren, *the Prophets*, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience" (James v. 10). In the one passage, the order of the names, "the Lord Jesus and *their own Prophets*," in the other their speaking in the name of the Lord, the Lord whose coming drew nigh, the same Lord Jesus, forbid our going back to the martyrdoms of the persecutions under Joash, or Ahaz, or Manasseh, and compel us to think of the *Prophets* of the Christian Church. These also it was that the Seer of Patmos saw when he looked on the "souls beneath the altar that were slain for *the word of God*, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. vi. 9, 10). It was of *these Prophets* that the Apocalyptic angel declared himself the "fellow-servant" (Rev. xxii. 9). The Lord was "the God of *their* spirits" (Rev. xxii. 6). Of *their* prophetic word it was true, that "the testimony of Jesus," and "the spirit of Prophecy" were co-extensive terms (Rev. xix. 10).

We have seen, then, abundant proof of this activity in utterance among the Prophets of the Apostolic Church. Have we any reason to think of a like activity showing itself either in recording the prophecies that were thus spoken, or in writings that

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came from a direct prophetic inspiration? Proportions seem to be nearly equal on either side. On one hand, the age was one of wide-spread culture, in the Greek and Western Churches, at all events, there must have been among the hearers many capable of reporting at the time, or collecting afterwards, utterances which they must have counted precious. On the other, it must be remembered that the majority of the early converts belonged to the less educated class, and that throughout the New Testament there runs the feeling that the world was to be converted not chiefly by books, but by the living, personal testimony of the Apostles of Christ. The mere absence of such books from the extant literature of the first century is not in itself decisive. In the New Testament we have traces left of many lost books.

* It will be interesting and instructive to put together the titles of such as are mentioned.

- (1.) The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. xxi. 14).
- (2.) The Book of Jasher (Joshua x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18).
- (3.) The Book of Nathan the Prophet (1 Chron. xxix. 29).
- (4.) The Book of Gad the Seer (*ibid.*).
- (5.) The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41).
- (6.) The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite (2 Chron. ix. 29).
- (7.) The Visions of Iddo the Seer (*ibid.*).
- (8.) The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings xv. 29, and *passim*).
- (9.) The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (1 Kings xv. 31, and *passim*).
- (10.) The Prophecy of Jonah (*probably* written) (2 Kings : 25).
- (11.) The Book of Shemaiah the Prophet (2 Chron. xii. 15).
- (12.) The Book of Iddo the Seer concerning Genealogies (*ibid.*).
- (13.) The Story of the Prophet Iddo (2 Chron. xiii. 22. See writer, but title of book different).
- (14.) The Book of Jehu the son of Hanani (2 Chron. xx. 34).
- (15.) The Acts of Uzziah by Isaiah the son of Amos (2 Chron. xxvi. 22).
- (16.) The Lamentations of Jeremiah for Josiah (2 Chron. xxx. 25). Probably different from the Lamentations now extant, which are subsequent to the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans.

Is it too much to say that we possess but a portion of a w

both historical and prophetic, written by the seers of Israel. In the New Testament it is hardly conceivable that a man of St. Paul's wonderful energy should have spent twenty years, doing the work of an Evangelist, without writing a single letter to either a Church or an individual convert. Traces of such letters are found indeed even in the Epistles that have come down to us. The notice that the "salutation" in his own handwriting is "the token in every Epistle" (2 Thess. iii. 17), is surely the language of one who has already written many letters. In 1 Cor. v. 9, there is a reference to something that had been said in a lost Epistle to the Church of Corinth; in Col. iv. 16, to another, also lost, to the Church of Laodicea. St. Peter, in writing to the Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, speaks of an Epistle which St. Paul had written to them (2 Pet. iii. 2), in terms which are not met by the extant letters to the Galatians or the Ephesians. A reference to such writings, whether by himself or other Prophets, may be found, I believe, in the closing words of the Epistle to the Romans.

St. Paul has been speaking (Rom. xvi. 25) of "his Gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been *kept in silence* since the world began." Of this mystery he adds that it was "now manifested, and by means of *prophetic writings*, according to the commandment of the Everlasting God, made known to all nations."

prophetic literature, and that we cannot think of the greater part of what has been lost as less inspired and authoritative than the Books which have come down to us? Enough, at all events, has been said, to show that there is no force in any *a priori* objection to the hypothesis of the possible loss of a Gospel or Epistle.

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It will be seen that I have given the words "phetic writings" or Scriptures, where the Author's Version has "*the Scriptures of the prophets*," an absence of the definite article in the Greek in this change imperative. The words do not then, necessarily, to a known collection like the phetic Scriptures of the Old Testament, and, much as the writers of the New Testament they do speak of the Prophets of the Old use article, the presumption would be that the words not refer to them at all. But bear in mind the Gospel of which St. Paul speaks was that given him "by revelation" (Gal. i. 12); that the mystery was that which, having been "hid from ages and generations," was then revealed to the Apostles. *Prophets* of the Christian Church (Eph. iii. 5), that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body:" bear in mind, further, that St. Paul both possessed (Acts xiii. 1) and claimed (1 Cor. xiii. 2) the prophetic gift, and it will not be too strange that, in speaking of "prophetic writings" God's instruments for evangelising the world should be referring to his own Epistles or to such like statements of the Truth.

An unexpected light is thrown on this interpretation by a remarkable passage in the works of the earliest of the Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome. The Clement, in all probability, of whom St. Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Philippians (iv. 3). was a presbyter, or bishop of the Church of Rome. He wrote to the Church of Corinth. St. Paul, it may be remembered, wrote from the latter city to the Church at Rome. Whatever documents there are quoted or referred to by the one may fairly

assumed as probably known to both. If a quotation by one, and an allusion by the other, point in the same direction, the coincidence is at least strong evidence of probable identity. Now it is, to say the least, remarkable that Clement twice quotes, as if from an authoritative and inspired book, what he calls "the prophetic word," or (as the same words are rendered in the English of 2 Peter i. 19), the "word of prophecy." The passage is too interesting to be passed over, and I therefore translate it. "Let us serve God," the passage begins, "and we shall be righteous, but if we do not serve because we do not believe the promise of God, we shall be miserable. For thus also speaks *The Prophetic Word*, 'miserable are the double-minded, and they that doubt in their heart, who say, "all these things we heard even in the times of our fathers, but we, waiting from day to day, have seen none of them." O ye foolish ones, liken yourselves unto a tree; take the vine as an example. First of all it sheds its leaves, and then the tender shoot comes out, and then the sour grape, after that the ripe grape in its season. So likewise my people endured wanderings and afflictions; afterward they shall receive their good things.'" (Clem. Rom. ii. 11, a shorter quotation being given in i. 23).^{*} Here then we have the distinct recognition of a written *Prophetic Word*, in the first century, speaking of the coming of the Lord, not fixing times and seasons, exhorting men to patience, entirely in harmony with what we find in the Canonical writings of the New Testament. Is not the probability inde-

^{*} The second Epistle ascribed to Clement is now regarded by most critics as spurious. As the passage in question is found in both Epistles, the doubtfulness of one is immaterial. In the first it is cited as "this Scripture."

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finitely great that this may have been among "prophetic writings" of which St. Paul speaks among the "other Scriptures" which St. Paul classes as standing on the same level with St. Paul's Epistles (2 Peter iii. 16)? Does it not suggest the thought that St. Paul's words, "Every Scripture being God-inspired, is also profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," may have been meant (their very form being carefully generalised for this express purpose*) to include the inspired writings of the Christian Church as well as those of the Jewish?

Another side, and that a darker one, of the history of the Apostolic Church has yet to be noticed. Side by side with the true Prophets, there were in almost every Church, numerous and powerful false prophets speaking words that came, not from the spirit of holiness and truth, but from a counterfeit, or even it may be, a dæmonic inspiration. So it had often been. The bitterest trial of the old Prophets of Israel had been that they were thus thwarted and opposed. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so" (Jer. v. 31). So it was now. This also had been foretold by the Lord who had raised up the true Prophets (Matt. vii. 15; xxiv. 11), and whose prediction was abundantly fulfilled. Speaking with the same claim to authority, in the same thrilling tones, their sensuous imagination roused, it may

* Here again the English version obscures the special distinctions of the Greek. "The Holy Scriptures," sacred writings, records, of verse 15, describe the known collection of Books which every Jewish scribe studied or interpreted. The "Scripture" of verse 16 is a different word, and the "*all*" is distributive rather than collective.

to an orgiastic frenzy, they spoke words from which all true teachers shrank back in abhorrence. At Corinth those who would not see the true Christ in the crucified Nazarene were heard to utter the awful words, "Jesus is Anathema" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, they rushed blindly into a region which they had not seen with any true intuition (Col. ii. 18). Giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings that came from demons, they led men to a false, Manichean asceticism, sure to end in a hideous and loathsome licentiousness, instead of to a true holiness (1 Tim. iv. 1). They brought in destructive heresies, even "denying the Lord that bought them," denying that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, and therefore treating the flesh as if it might have its own way, and lead them whither it would, without affecting their salvation (1 John iv. 1—3).

It was to guard against the perilous teaching of such men as these that St. Paul laid down the rule that no seemingly prophetic utterance was truly such, unless the man spoke "according to the proportion," according, we may say, to the analogy "of the faith,"—in harmony, *i.e.*, with the truth of which the Church was "the pillar and the ground," the great central "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 15, 16). With their denials and perversions present to his mind, St. John warned his readers to "try the spirits, whether they be of God," and his test of Truth, like St. Paul's, lay in the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ was Lord, and had come truly in the flesh (1 John iv. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xii. 3). Therefore it was that there was to be no blind acceptance even of inspired, or appa-

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rently inspired, utterances; but men were to and judge (1 Cor. xiv. 29). As the result of testing, we may well believe that the speculations which approved themselves to the real conscience of the Church, as in harmony with faith, gained a wider currency as in every way worthy. Of all the explanations that have been given of the "faithful sayings" which occur frequently in the Pastoral Epistles, this appears most probable. Spoken by the Prophets of the Church, as condensed expressions of the Truth, were now endorsed, as it were, with the *Apprimatur*, as containing "sound," i.e., *healthy* doctrine, in marked contrast to the morbid, phantasies of the false prophets.

IV. Such are the broad patent facts on both sides. They suggest some thoughts which it will be better to put distinctly before our minds before we discuss the subject.

(1.) What we have seen is surely worth even to the Apologist, than much that takes a place among the Evidences of Christianity. In every page of the New Testament, implicitly taken for granted, we have traces of a power mysterious, wonderful, exceptional. It came to men unprepared for it by birth or training. It gave a power over the hearts of men which no sophist, poet, or orator had ever exercised. It was at once a "sign" for those who believed not, and it built up those that did believe. This, more than philosophical signs and wonders, more even than the ties of Christian brotherhood and purity of life, was the secret of the Church's power to overcome the world. Its victory stands as a great central fact in the world's history.


history. This is the explanation given by those who were fighting the battle, fighting it against overwhelming odds, and yet assured of victory. Can we suggest any other as adequate? And if we admit this, is it not, at the least, a proof of a new force breaking through the succession of physical, and even of ethical causation, a force which, as we watch its character and its working, we cannot think of as other than divine?

(2.) Does it not give us a fresh sense of the preciousness of the Apostolic writings to think of them as relics of a time so full to overflowing in Divine Gifts? They were inspired because the men who wrote them were Prophets. Even the historic work of the Evangelists has its counterpart in the numerous chronicles and histories that were written by the older Prophets, and originated, as their labours had done, in the impulse and guidance of the Spirit, making memory more truthful, judgment more enlightened, the imagination which the historian needs more vivid. It is something to have received as our inheritance what has come to us from an age when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and new floods of Divine Truth rushed in upon the souls of men. If we are tempted sometimes, as we well may be, to wonder and grieve that we have so little, we may also rejoice and give thanks that we have so much. If the Church of Christ was careful to gather up the fragments so that nothing might be lost, those very fragments have shown themselves to possess a marvellous and creative power. Through all the centuries they have fed, through all the Church's life they will continue to feed the souls that hunger, meeting all wants—conforming them—

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selves, we might almost say, to all true and tastes—milk to the child in age or heart, ‘meat,’ solid food, to those that are of full age retain undiminished the old power of the *p word*. They reveal to men the secrets of the hearts. They bring before the startled con the terrors of the coming Judgment. They c the penitent and the mourner with the thou the glory yet to be revealed.

(3.) What we have seen as to the mingl the evil and the good, the true and the cou prophecy, may well comfort us when our hea and sink at the doubts, errors, denials, whic encompass us. We think that if our lot ha cast in that first golden age, listening to the of Apostles and Prophets, we should have be with the full assurance of faith, and there have been no room for doubt. Vain and 1 thought! There would have been the risk of utter denial, more portentous heresy, more ab depths of evil. False prophets with all decei ness of unrighteousness, teachers calling them Apostles though they were of the synagog Satan (Rev. ii. 2, 9), men speaking in the na Peter and of James to bring believers back t “beggarly elements of Judaism,” speaking in name of Paul to plunge them into the foulest lessness—this is what we should have had t counter. Amid these rocks and shoals and quick we should have had to make our voyage, ar might easily, “as concerning the faith, have shipwreck.” And it may comfort us in the mi our perplexities to notice how, in that remot Time, as God’s great instrument in the w



judgment, sifted the true from the false, the precious from the counterfeit, and brought about in due order the vindication and the ascendancy of the Truth. The "day" came which "tried every man's work of what sort it was" (1 Cor. iii. 13). The fire burnt up the wood, hay, stubble, of man's devices and imaginations. Much perished utterly, and much even that was true and good has passed away. It did its work and bore its fruit. But the gold and the silver and the precious stones, the words of the Apostles and Prophets as they stand in the New Testament—this has been tried in the furnace and has come out purified and brightened, an everlasting possession for mankind, the inheritance of the Church of Christ even unto the end.

(4.) There remains yet another lesson which we in this age need to learn. We know not fully why, but so it is, the gifts that were then given have not been given since in the same measure, or in like form. "Tongues" and "prophecy" have alike "failed." But not the less does it remain true "that the Spirit divideth to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11). The "word of wisdom" has its counterpart in the wide thoughts of Origen and Augustine, of Hooker and of Butler, the "word of knowledge" in the labours of great interpreters, "governments" in all true pastoral rule, "helps" in all forms of loving sympathy and kindness, and so too Prophecy has its analogue among us. Not in formal decrees of synods, or elaborate teaching of dogmatists, but when the "word of the Lord" comes with power to the heart of a man, and goes forth from it straight to the hearts of others, then the prophet's work is, in its measure, renewed among

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us. And what was true of the original is true of the analogue. With that we too are called to overcome the world, and make men confess that God is with us of a truth. We are panic-stricken at the growth of unbelief around us. We seek weapons which we have not proved, or which experience of the past has shown to be cunning and useless, or which, if effectual, belong, like tipped and poisoned arrows, to savage and not to Christian warfare. Here is the weapon which we need, the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17), "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joint and marrow" (Heb. iv. 12). Not by cries of alarm, or wailings of despondency, or railing accusations can the doubters around us be won over, and the false teachers silenced. That power belongs only or chiefly to the Prophetic Word. Let us speak that word of reproof, of comfort, and of hope, as it was spoken of old, by Prophets and Apostles, by the thousands who, since their time, have drunk of the same cup—let us prophesy according to the proportion of the analogy, the accordant harmony of the faith, and our will will not fail. It has done its work in past ages, in spite of errors, excesses, mutual antagonism, and it will do it yet again. Not the doctors of the Schools of St. Bernard and St. Francis; not the system-builders of Trent or Geneva, but Tyndale, and Luther, and Xavier; not the Laudian divines, but Leighton, Taylor, and Baxter and Bunyan; not the Geometrical Bishops, but Wesley and Whitefield and Simeon—these are the names to which we now look with bright eyes for the glory of the kingdom. So it will be now. Let us strive to look at the question

are vexing us as we now look on those which vexed our fathers. Amid the warfare of half truths and rash denials, let us recognise *the Prophetic Word*, whenever and by whomsoever it may be spoken, accepting it as limited and tested by the analogy of the faith. So we come back to the old words as the truest and the best, "Covet earnestly the best gifts:" "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church;" "and yet show I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. xii. 31; xiv. 12).

II.

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PART I.

WE are familiar enough with the ethical and spiritual thoughts which gather round the name of the first disciple who gave his testimony with his blood. The sermon of Keble in the "Christian Year" teaches us to connect his death with the yet greater martyrdom that preceded his, and to think of him as one who died for the sake of his dear Lord,

"Presses on and welcomes death,"

who—

"Foremost and nearest to His throne,
And likest Him in look and tone,"

was the first to show the power of the Crucifixion to impart His own long-suffering love to those who follow in His steps. The saying attributed to Augustine—"Si Martyr Stephanus non sic orasset, ecclesia Paulum hodie non haberet,"* "If Stephen had not prayed, the church would have lost Paul"—leads us to look forward as well as backward. We find in the great change that transformed the persecutor into the Apostle, a pro-

* August. Serm. 382 : but the authorship is questionable!

the prevailing might of intercession. We see that the death of Stephen, his blameless holiness, his willing sacrifice of himself, were, as all such acts are, a partial reproduction of what had been finished, once for all, in its completeness, on the cross, a "filling up of that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24), and thus had in them something of a mediatorial, propitiatory character. But we fail for the most part, I believe, to recognise the historical significance of his teaching and his death. We look on it, it may be, as the greatest of all martyrdoms but One, but we do not ask ourselves what the special truth was to which he bore his witness, how he became the special object of attack, in what way, by his teaching as well as by his prayers, he may have influenced, directly or indirectly, the future thoughts and words of the Apostle of the Gentiles. A closer study will show, if I mistake not, that the few verses that record his work and death take their place among the chapters of Church History that are most full of momentous import, that his own teaching, as represented by his accusers, or embodied in his speech, marked the first great step in the expansion of the Church of Christ. Short as his career was, it was that of an epoch-making life.

The incidents which first brought Stephen into a position of prominence, seemed to belong to another region of the Church's life than that of doctrine. "In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians (Hellenists) against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." The fact is in itself significant. When the

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"hundred and twenty" came forward on the day of Pentecost, they were heard with the word of question, "Are not all these that speak, Galilees?" They were the peasant followers of One who, though He had at times appeared and taught in Jerusalem and had had a secret following among the rulers of the Jews there, had yet made that despised, heathen district ("Galilee of the Gentiles") the region of his labours, and appeared in men's eyes as the prophet of a provincial sect. But the day of Pentecost, perhaps also the direct activity of the apostles, and others like him, had made a great change. The Church was now Hellenistic as well as Hebrew.

These "Grecians," it may be well to state, in inaccurate notions on this point have found (even with writers of high repute), were not confused with heathenism. Our translators seem* to have deliberately chosen that form of the word in this passage, as distinct from the "Greeks" which they use elsewhere, in order that they might express to the English the distinction which is patent in the Greek. The "Grecian" or "Hellenistic" were those who were scattered in countries where Greek was spoken, and who themselves spoke Greek. The crowd of pilgrims who came up to the yearly feasts, those consequently who were present on the day of Pentecost, were predominantly Hellenistic. They were the "dispersed" among the *Greeks*,† of whom the Jews spoke tauntingly in John vii. 35, those that "were scattered."

* If this were so, it may be noted that they were the notice the distinction. All the other English versions, from the Vulgate to the Rhemish, have "Greeks" in this passage as in

† "Gentiles" in the Authorised Version; but the word is the same as that elsewhere translated "Greeks."

abroad," those "of the dispersion," in 1 Peter i. And of these the most prominent were those who are afterwards named as disputing with Stephen the "Libertines," or freed-men, *i.e.*, emancipated Jewish slaves from Rome, the Jews of Cyrene, Alexandria, of Cilicia, and the Roman proconsular province of Asia. It was characteristic of these men that they used the Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures, that they were brought more into contact with the habits and thoughts of the heathen world, that some of them, at Alexandria and elsewhere, were brought also under the influence of its philosophy. In some cases this probably helped to widen the horizon of their sympathies. In most their very knowledge of the abominations of heathen life, the scorn and insult to which their religion were subjected, tended to make them more bitter and arrogant even than the Hebrew population of Judæa. The pilgrim feeling strong in them, and their veneration for the Temple might almost seem to have been measured by the distance which they had to travel to keep their Passover or Pentecost within its walls. The Jews of Asia, it will be remembered, were those who in a later period raised an uproar against St. Paul on a groundless charge that he had brought an uncircumcised heathen within the sacred precincts (Acts xxi. 27).

A large section, then, of the Church at Jerusalem belonged to this class. They claimed their share of the alms that were doled out in the first enthusiasm of love which marked the new brotherhood. A suspicion and jealousy found their way into what then had been a society of one heart and soul.

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Hellenists complained that their "widows neglected in the daily ministration," and murmured against the "Hebrews," obviously on the ground that the Apostles—probably also the whole body of the original hundred and twenty disciples—Palestine Jews, and therefore belonging to the Jewish section. It was, in modern phrase, a complaint that they were not "represented" in the administration of the Church. The difficulty could only be met in two ways. Either the Twelve must personally undertake the responsibility of distributing the alms, and interpose the weight of their authority against the murmurers, or else some new organization must be devised for the special need. The former course would withdraw them from their proper work of teaching and directing, and absorb their time in that of "serving tables," attending to the arrangements of guests at the daily common meal, where they met to "break bread," or presiding at the council where relief was given in coin. They rightly rejected it on that ground, as interfering with their higher duties, and appealed to the whole body of the disciples to help them in adopting the other alternative. They left the choice to them. These men were to be seven in number, of well-established repute, "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom," men, *i.e.*, who would command the respect of the Church by their gifts as well as by their integrity who had, in various measures, some of the special tokens of the Spirit's working, prophetic utterance, fiery zeal, keen insight into character, the wisdom which gives a right judgment in all things.

It has been often noticed as a token of the straightforwardness and good feeling of the Jerusalem

Church, that every one of the seven thus chosen bore a Greek name, and that this (presumably, though not certainly) was an indication that they belonged to the Hellenistic section of the Church, and were intended to be its special representatives. Either, as is possible, the "Grecians" were a majority, or the "Hebrews" also voted for them, in order to disarm suspicion. The fact that one of them, Nicolas, is described as "a proselyte of Antioch," suggests the inference that that class had already risen to some prominence. It lies in the nature of the case that he was what the Jews called a "proselyte of righteousness," circumcised, and acknowledging his obligation to keep the whole law of Moses. Had he been less than this, the question afterwards raised and settled by the case of Cornelius would have been already decided. It is obvious that Stephen was the most conspicuous of the seven thus chosen. His name stands first in order. He alone is described as being full "of the Holy Ghost and of power." The choice of the multitude is approved by the Apostles, and the seven are solemnly appointed to their office by prayer and the laying on of hands. Popularly we speak of them as the "seven *deacons*," and it is of course true that they were appointed to free the Apostles from the task of "serving" or "ministering" (*διακονεῖν*) at tables. It should be remembered, however, that their position was one of much greater importance than that commonly occupied by the deacons of the later Church; that they were not confined to subordinate functions, but entered, according to their gifts, upon the work of evangelists and teachers; that they are *never* called "deacons" in the New Testament, but always

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spoken of as a distinct body, under the title of Seven." In some churches, notably perhaps in Rome, where the number of deacons was 1 after this example to seven, when the presbyters were as many as forty-eight, they may have occupied a position more analogous to that of their proto-bishops and so have risen, as being, in modern phraseology, the secretaries, chaplains, financial agents of the bishop, into a prominence which led them to come down on the more numerous presbyters, and tempted them to the assumption of authority which called for the reproof of Polycarp and Ignatius.

The natural desire to know something of the previous life of the man who was thus placed at the head of the new order, the primitive *Arch-deacon* if it were, is one which we have no materials for satisfying with any certainty. We ask in vain, Was he one of those who had heard Christ during His ministry on earth, and followed Him as a disciple? Was he one of those who, like Nicodemus, and the chief rulers, believed, but would not confess, because they feared the reproach of men? Was he one of the three thousand who were converted and baptized on the day of Pentecost, and, if so, from what country had he come? These are questions which we cannot answer. I pass beyond the limits of certainty into those of hypothesis in suggesting the probability of his having been the *first conspicuous representative of the Christians of Rome*. So far as we know, the suggestion is a new one, and it is not to state the grounds on which I have been led to adopt it as at least tenable. (1) We have to keep in mind the prominence of "*strangers of Rome, and proselytes,*" who at this time were settle

Jerusalem, and who are mentioned (Acts ii. 10) as having been impressed by the marvels of the day of Pentecost. By the decree of the senate under Tiberius, A.D. 19, they had been banished from Rome, where they had been settled in large numbers in the Trans-Tiberine districts. Four thousand of these had been sent to Sardinia on military service. Others had found their way to the city of their fathers. They would naturally be among the most conspicuous sections of the Hellenistic Jews in the Holy City, likely therefore to be represented in the new brotherhood, and to have a special claim to a representative in the Seven who were chosen to watch over the interests of that body. If they had one, the very fact that he belonged to the imperial city would lead to his having a priority over the others with whom he was associated. (2) We know from St. Paul's message of greeting in Rom. xvi. 7, that there were at least two conspicuous Roman disciples, whom he calls his "kinsmen," Andronicus and Junia,* and of whom he says that they were "in Christ" before him, members of the church, *i.e.*, while Stephen was in his highest activity,—"*of note among the Apostles.*" Here then we have an indirect proof of the existence at Jerusalem of those who afterwards became the nucleus of the Roman Church. This, at least, adds to the probability that they would have a representative in a body which was purposely chosen so as to give no cause of suspicion on the score of local prepossessions. Rome would not be treated worse than Antioch. The fact that these two were kinsmen of Saul of Tarsus throws

* This, however, may also be a *man's* name, Junias contracted from Jutianus.

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a side-light, hitherto unnoticed, on the motive made him so bitter in his hostility. (3) For among those with whom Stephen contended "they of the synagogue of the Libertines." Some there was which brought him into direct, immediate contact, and therefore conflict, with them. These, by the consent of nearly all Biblical scholars were none other than those Jews, "*libertini* genus as Tacitus (Annal., ii. 85) calls them, who had expelled from Rome, men who had been prisoners and sold as slaves by Pompeius and his generals, and had subsequently obtained their freedom, who then had been allowed to take up abode at Rome and carry on their trades till they provoked the jealousy of the senate by their zealous propagandism. If these were Stephen's chief associates, it is natural to suppose that he stood in closer relation to them than to those of Alexandria or Cilicia, that he may have himself been one of them. (4) I add another coincidence, not, I think, without significance. The name of Stephanus at the time when it became famous through the martyr was not a common one. But it appears at this period, in a Roman inscription, as belonging to a "freedman," or *Libertinus*, of Livia, the mother of Emperor Tiberius, and as belonging to one who carried on the business of a goldsmith (*aurifex*:

* See the article *Libertines* in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

† See Gori's elaborate monograph on the *Columbarium Liviarum*, p. 153. The "Stephanus" in question is described as *immunis*, exempted, i.e., from the ritual services of some *Collegium* or *Sodalitium*, some guild or club, that otherwise would have been binding on him. Was this a privilege granted to Jewish freedmen? The same *columbarium* contains the name of Tyranus, a "physician" to the empress (p. 120). Can we trace a connection between this bearer of the name and the Tyranus whose legend

Looking to the facts that the Jews then, as at period, commonly occupied themselves in the other kindred lines of business, that they patronised by Augustus and his wife, that the Great paid special court to Livia, and that he contributed largely to the expenses of his recent games in the theatre at Cæsarea, that he left as his legacy to her all his gold and vessels (Joseph. Antiq., xvi. 5, 1; xvii. 8, 1) he sent two of his sons to be educated at Rome, the Jews who were at Rome were almost all freedman class (*i.e.*, "Libertines"), we have, I think, sufficient points of agreement to make it probable that the Stephanus of the inscription referred to was of the sons of Israel, that some kinsman of his, in habits of administration, may have borne him out, and so to add another link to the circumstantial evidence of the Roman origin of the proto-martyr.

It is evident that a new element of power was brought into the service of the Church. This was the marvel of the day of Pentecost, it is

room was lent at Ephesus to the friend of one who was called "physician," and probably himself a freedman? The *Colossian* was a kind of pauper or slave cemetery, in which the ashes of the dead, after the bodies had been burned, were kept in urns, with two or two together, as in the pigeon-holes of a dovecote.

* Yet another coincidence, hitherto, I believe, unnoticed, presents itself. Commentators have been perplexed at the number seven for the so-called deacons. In Jewish synagogues the number of subordinate ministers was three. Lightfoot (*Hebraica, in loc.*) confesses himself unable to assign a reason. In Rome, however, we find a body of seven men specially appointed to preside over the heathen religious banquets which were given to the Christian *agapæ*. They were known as the *Epulones*, and, singularly enough, had been appointed to the *Pontifices*. Such an institution would, of course, be fitted for the *Libertini* of the Imperial City. It may, perhaps, account for the long-continued limitation of the deacons of the Roman Church to the original number. Compare Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities," *s.v.* *Epulones*.

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cancel the difference in degree between the gifts and the acquired knowledge of the Galilean peasants and those of the representative of the Pharisees of the imperial city. There is a higher and a wider acquaintance with Jewish history or tradition and a bolder freedom of interpretation, pervading a large portion of his speech. St. Luke seems lavish of that which brings out the various aspects of his spiritual life. He is "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom" "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"—"full of faith and power" (Acts vi. 3, 5, 8). They were unable to "resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." Add to this the singular majesty and beauty implied in the words, almost solitary in the New Testament, which tell us that all who looked on him "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts vi. 15), and it is not difficult to measure the impression made by the appearance of such a convener in the ranks of the preachers of the new faith. St. Luke sums up the result in one of those short, pregnant sentences, every word of which is full of meaning: "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

We are carried back to the state of Jerusalem at the time that immediately preceded the commencement of Stephen's work. The chief opponents of the Galilean Apostles had been the higher section of the Jewish priesthood, who were predominantly Sadducees in their belief (Acts iv. 1; v. 17). Gamaliel, the learned or President of the Sanhedrim, the successor

* The words were used in the speech of Rabbis to describe the looks of Moses and Aaron when they stood before Pharaoh. Lightfoot and Schöttgen *in loc.*

Hillel in the great scribal succession, the representative of the Pharisees, had appeared as the advocate of a policy of toleration. His words, "Refrain from these men and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts v. 38, 39), seem almost to imply a latent conviction to which he shrank,—like those chief rulers whom St. John mentions (ch. xii.),—in his time-serving timidity, from giving utterance. His tone is an exact reproduction of that of Nicodemus. The countenance given by such a man to the rising society was obviously strongly in its favour. It accounts for that rapid extension of its numbers, which made the appointment of Stephen and his companions a necessity. They entered on their work at a moment when all things were in their favour. They had already gained the confidence of the whole Church by their integrity and discernment. Their action was now to become aggressive.

And the result of Stephen's work especially was an almost immediate expansion. "The word of God increased." That phrase describes, we cannot doubt, the *inward* life and power of the movement. It is not a mere synonym for the addition of new converts mentioned in the next clause. It means that which was "the word of God" in the old prophetic sense, the divine impulse, the apocalypse of new truths, spread from soul to soul, as by an electric sympathy. There was a stirring of the stagnant waters, a kindling of a new and holier flame than had burnt before. There was a development of life and teaching, as well as an increase of numbers; and its effect was to

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change the attitude of parties altogether. A multitude of the priests" who had at least acquiesced in the opposition of the chief members of their order were now converted (Acts vi. 7). The Pharisees who had before supported a policy of toleration were now the most active in their antagonism.

II.

The character of Stephen's teaching might be inferred from the facts already given. It is made more clearly before us in the charges urged against him by his accusers: "We have heard him say blasphemous words against Moses and against this place . . . This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us" (Acts vi. 11-14). The words were spoken, it is true, by false witnesses, but falsehood, in such cases, is always attended by a colourable distortion of some actual fact. They pointed to a new element of truth, which had not entered as yet, into the teaching of the Twelve. Had we been taught, we must believe, that the hour was come and had now come, when men should no longer worship the Father at Jerusalem or Gerizim, a sanctuary with special prerogatives above other sanctuaries, but should worship Him everywhere alike, "in spirit and in truth." This struck at the root of the priestly feeling which led the Hellenistic Jews to take long journeys, and incur a large expense, for what they looked on as entitling them to special blessings, and gaining for them a fuller measure of God's favour.

than they could attain to elsewhere. He had taught that the law of Moses, whatever might be its political or educational value, had been as a heavy yoke, which neither that generation nor their fathers had been able to bear; that it did not help men to attain the righteousness which it required as indispensable. And lastly, in words which, rightly understood, are more significant than any, he had entered his protest against the "customs," as they were called, the vast accumulation of rules and regulations, entering into every act and every hour of life, which the Pharisees had brought together, and which they ascribed to an oral tradition that had its starting-point with the great lawgiver. The very words "which Moses delivered to us," are significant, as intended to distinguish the "*customs*" thus referred to from the written law. The preaching of Stephen was a protest against the "traditions of the elders," which Christ had condemned already, a protest by anticipation against what was afterwards collected in the Talmud.

It might seem strange, at first, that such teaching as this should have had any special attraction for the *priests*.* They, we might think, were likely to have all their passions, interests, prejudices, roused into full activity to defend the system with which they were identified, and which was thus attacked. It is probable, however, that the great body of the priests at this period had little reason to be satisfied with their position. The higher members of the order, Sadducees like Annas and Caiaphas, men who courted the favour of Roman governors, and sought after the

* It is a singular instance of the disturbing effect of party prepossessions, that Beza, in the teeth of all evidence, without the authority of a single MS., rejected the verse as spurious on the ground of its improbability.

pontificate, tyrannized over them, and defrauded them of their due share in the offerings made to the temple treasury. Their relation to them was something like that of the canons residentiary of a great cathedral at the time of the Reformation* to the minor canons and pauperised mass-priests who went through the routine of worship. And, on the other hand, the Levites were at this very time encroaching on their prerogative, and claiming the right to wear the linen ephod, which had been their distinctive dress. Nor were they better off as regards the Pharisees. The tendency of Rabbinism had been from the first to disparage the office of the priesthood, to elevate that of the scribes. The sons of Aaron had sunk into a degraded, impoverished class, "priests of the people of the earth," as the Rabbis called them, not even connected permanently, as in the analogy just suggested, with the worship of the temple, but coming up for their week's turn twice a year, and then going down to reside in some city within reach of the capital, living upon scanty allowances and ill-paid tithes, eking out a maintenance by copying phylacteries or writing bills of divorcement.† And, further, it must be remembered that the Pharisees, interpreting the Levitical law with all their wonted strictness in regions with which they themselves were not personally concerned, made it more than ever irksome to the priests who came under its provisions, and that those who with little heart and no enthusiasm, went through a daily ritual like that of sacrifice, cutting the throats of the

* Comp. Dean Milman's "Annals of St. Paul's," ch. vii.

† Comp. the article *Priests*, in the "Dictionary of the Bible," ii. p. 922.

struggling victims, catching the hot blood in basins, paddling with naked feet in the gore that flowed over the stone pavement of the temple, were not unlikely to welcome as a message of emancipation the teaching which told them that these things were "decaying and waxing old," and "ready to vanish away." The recollection of that rending of the "veil" on the day of the crucifixion may have left on some of them a dim, confused impression that the end was near. Many must have heard the words which the Prophet of Nazareth had spoken in Solomon's porch or other precincts of the temple.

It is, at any rate, easy to conceive how the zeal of the Hellenistic Jews was roused against the new phase of truth. The reverence for holy places is always strongest in those who are themselves pilgrims. Those "Libertines" who had been driven from Rome for their religion's sake, those Jews of Alexandria, Cyrene, Asia, who gloried in every practice that served as a line of demarcation to separate them from the heathens, many of whom had obtained from Julius or Augustus special edicts of toleration or immunity,*—these were likely enough to oppose a teaching which told them that they were wasting their time and strength on that which did not profit. And lastly, there were those of *Cilicia*, and among them the commanding zeal of Saul of Tarsus,† then in the full intensity of his Pharisaism, excelling all his equals, exasperated, it may be, first by the defection of Barnabas, whom there is good

* Comp. the singularly interesting documents given by Josephus, *Antiq.*, xiv. 10.

† The fact that Saul was also by birth a *Roman* citizen must not be forgotten in its bearing on the main hypothesis of this paper. He might have a point of contact with the Libertine, as well as with the Cilician Synagogue.

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reason to look upon as having been an earl and companion ; and then by the conversic kinsmen, Andronicus and Junias ; and then by the disappointing calmness of Gamal master at whose feet he had sat, from whom imbibed the zealous devotion which had no would seem to him, so timidly and unworthi back. Every one of these incidents, do shocked and startled him—told, more or les the stability of his convictions, took its place the “pricks” against which he continued to “ but the result of the first sense of insecurity have seen in a thousand instances, was a loud fession of the shaken faith, a more vehement c tion to that which seems to threaten it.

The fact that the attack on Stephen origi not in a popular outbreak or individual accu but in a combination of *synagogues*, seems to ir the form and method of his teaching. He, li great successor, and his great Master, would t to have gone into the synagogues on the Sal and have risen when the Scriptures had been to deliver his “word of exhortation,” and so preached Jesus and His kingdom. The effect doubtless be like that of which we read after in the synagogues of Antioch in Pisidia, or TI lonica, or Corinth. Some would have their l opened ; others would be hardened in their unl and stirred to a passionate hostility. The section, baffled in discussion, had recourse to weapons. The charge of blasphemy which had brought against the Master, was brought again disciple also. It was connected, as it had before, with the charge of a threat that the t

should be destroyed by the Nazarene prophet. The two counts in the indictment before the Sanhedrim were identical with those which had succeeded so well already. The absence of the Roman procurator from Jerusalem accounts for the omission of the other accusation of forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and exciting seditious tumults.

So it was, that they "stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes," and rose up against him, and dragged him off to the Sanhedrim. It was probably assembled in nearly its full force. Possibly Gamaliel, and those who felt with him, may have thought it better to adopt a policy of absence; and, as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had done on the previous great trial, they also, it may be, acting in the same way now, remained at home. We can hardly think of them as among those who "gnashed their teeth" as they were cut to the heart by the martyr's words. And, obviously, it was an open court. The high priest, the same Caiaphas who had already condemned our Lord, presided. The witnesses were present. The multitude stood eagerly listening. The witnesses made their statements, false in circumstance and detail, with just the degree of falsehood which distorts the truth. The accused stood calm, bright, undismayed. We have, it is clear, the reminiscence of some one who had been actually present when we are told that all who gazed on him "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." He is called upon by the high priest for his defence: "Are these things so?" and he proceeds to what, had it been completed, would have taken its place as the first Christian *Apologia*.

There is, perhaps, no document in the early history

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of the Church which bears such internal evidences of genuineness. Its very incompleteness; the transition from continuous argument to verse 51; its indignation in verse 51; its addition to, or omission from, the narrative of the Old Testament; these serve to show that we are reading a speech made probably by some scribe, or short-hand writer, at the time.* This very incompleteness, however, has made the speech of Stephen a problem, one, almost say, the stumbling-block, of commentators. They have not seen, for the most part, with an enlightened agreement, how this speech was an answer to the accusations, how the argument would have run on, if the speaker had been allowed to pursue its completion. Others have been content to dwell on the details of the discourse, to make much of real or seeming inaccuracies, or misquotations, slips of memory in speaker or reporter, as fatal to the theory of infallible, verbal inspiration, or to turn them over with explanations more or less plausible. In a commentary it would be a duty to discuss these points in detail. Here, I believe, it would be unprofitable, nor within my limits. It seems better to attempt to show the dominant thought which runs through this colossal *torso* of a speech, this fragment of a great whole, so far as that is possible.

What we may note, then, is that the defence of Stephen proclaims indirectly the principle,

* Who this was is, of course, only a matter of conjecture. Possibly, Saul of Tarsus, as the chief persecutor, may have taken part at the trial. I incline, however, to the belief that the writer of the Acts was himself at Jerusalem at the time, already beginning his work as the annalist of the Church, possibly himself a freedman and an Italian, and so one of the believing members of the synagogue of the Libertines, and drawn, therefore, to a special sympathy in Stephen's character and work.

wards developed by St. Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the divine education of Israel through the successive stages of a revelation, "in sundry times and divers manners" made unto the "fathers." Each step did its work, and then came something which seemed to supersede it, and yet in reality took up and preserved whatever in it was most precious and worthy of permanence. And in harmony with what was afterwards the chief argument of St. Paul, he begins with recalling them to the faith of Abraham, and the covenant made with Abraham as being, more even than the Law of Moses, the ground of the life of Israel. This would obviously have prepared the way for the further thought that the Law, when it had done its work, might pass away before the greater glory of the New Covenant, itself a restitution and an expansion of that which had been made with the great Father of the Faithful. So far the argument was general. It was obviously to have been followed by a proof, like St. Paul's, that those who most boasted of the law, and were most jealous for its honour, who received it "as the ordinance of angels," yet did not "keep" it, had therefore no claim to its rewards, and had a too true witness in their own consciences that it was powerless to give them life. The specific answer to the charges brought against him would naturally have come later. But incidentally we may note how the speech, as it goes on, gives, as it were, side-glances at the accusations, and meets them indirectly. He had been charged with speaking "blasphemous words against God," and his words utter the Divine name in the forms which expressed the highest reverence, as "the God of Glory," the "Most High

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God." He had been charged with speaking phemous words against Moses, and he dw every circumstance, even though it was not wr the Pentateuch, which exalted his fame; on hi "fair before God," "trained in all the wisdom Egyptians," "mighty in words and in deeds. speaks of him as "a ruler and redeemer," as received "living oracles" from God. He ha accused of speaking with reviling scorn of the Place, and he recognised the truth that ev "tabernacle of witness" which had preceded been full of divine meaning, and had been "after the pattern" that Moses had seen in on the mount. But in the very act of asserting holiness he maintained, in the true prophetic that both it and the Temple that followed it witnesses, not of a localised presence, but of on transcended all limitations of space. "Howb Most High dwelleth not in temples made with l as saith the Prophet;" and here, seeing the w fierceness of his hearers, and already hearin murmurs that were on the point of bursting yells, he sums up in one the utterances of So. himself in his dedication prayer, and of I "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my foot what house will ye build me, saith the Lord what is the place of my rest? Hath not my made all things?"* Here there was manifest wild roar of rage. The continuity of the speech broken off. The rest remained unspoken. H but time, ere the frenzied rush was made on hi speak a few burning words, to sum up the hist the nation as one of high gifts misused, and an

* 1 Kings viii. 27; 2 Chron. ii. 6; vi. 18; Isaiah lxvi.

recurring resistance to divine guidance. They, the circumcised in the flesh, were "uncircumcised in heart," "resisting the Holy Ghost," persecutors of the prophets, betrayers and murderers of Him whom the speaker proclaimed to be emphatically the "Just One," not keeping the law of which they were perpetually boasting, and accusing those who came "not to destroy but to fulfil," of speaking blasphemous words against it. Then came a yet wilder cry. With all the rage of men who were half-conscious that the words were true, they "gnashed upon him with their teeth." Whatever we read in history of the violence of church councils of the worst type, in the fourth and fifth centuries, was outdone in that session of the Sanhedrim. But it was given to Stephen to pass in spirit into a region where they could not follow or molest him, to see what they could not see. Looking on the bright sky (the meeting was probably held in an open unroofed court), he saw, in the fulness of spiritual intuition, the "opened heavens" which the Baptist and the Christ had seen when they went up together from the Jordan. He saw "the glory of God," the ineffable brightness as of the Shekinah cloud, and One whom he knew, by the sure witness of the Spirit, to be none other than the Lord Jesus. The whole man is as it were transfigured by that vision. Argument ceases—vehement rebuke is lulled. There is a "great calm" in the midst of the wild storm that rages round him. As one lost in ecstasy he burst into the cry, "Behold, I see the heavens open, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." He names his Lord by the title which He had always used in speaking of Himself, but which no other apostle or disciple used

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afterwards in speaking of Him.* It was a name yet familiar in men's ears. There was not the possibility of misconstruction, and therefore was nothing to lead the reverence of belief to abandon it for the names that afterwards became current in its stead, "Christ," "the Lord," "Lord Jesus." And the name, as Stephen used it, had a special significance. It was connected, we believe, in his thoughts with the prophetic vision of Daniel, when "one like the Son of Man came upon the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days" (Dan. vii. 13), with the citation of that prophecy by our Lord when He stood before the trial which was now trying Stephen (Matt. xxvi. 64). It was that reference of the words to His own future glory which then made Caiaphas rend his robe and led the packed meeting of the Sanhedrin to pronounce Him to be worthy of death as a blasphemer. Now they hear the self-same words from the lips of Stephen, proclaiming that that prophecy was already in part fulfilled. Whatever passion of rage and fanaticism had been kindled before, now it glowed like a furnace heated seven times beyond its wont. As if the words were too dreadful for their ears to listen to, they "cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with accord." The absence of the Roman procurator made it easy for them to do now what they had been afraid to do when Pilate was at hand. They passed their sentence as by acclamation, and procured at once to put it into execution. He was a "blasphemer," self-convicted, and the sin of blasphemy was to be punished by being stoned to death.

* Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14, are apparent, rather than real exceptions.

few minutes sufficed to drag him out of the city, and then the witnesses, after Eastern fashion, stripped themselves to the waist, that they might cast the first stone at him. Standing by, as the chief promoter of the prosecution, though not apparently an actual accuser, was the disciple of Gamaliel,* watching, with all the intensity of his nature, the last look and accents of his victim. The words of the dying martyr were few and mighty, and both were echoes of what had been spoken on the cross. One short prayer for himself:—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"—showed that he had lived and was dying in the faith that he might pray to the Son of Man as being One with the Father. One short prayer for others (must we not think that his eye fell on Saul as he uttered it?), "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," showed that the mind of Christ was found in him in its completeness. "And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

The immediate history of the day was soon ended. "Devout men carried the martyr to his burial, and made great lamentations over him." The phrase is specially significant. It seems certain that they were not members of the church, for then St. Luke would have called them "brethren," or "disciples;" and they would have been exposed to outrage and interruption in the act. It is almost equally certain that they were not, as Renan† and others have conjectured, proselytes from heathenism, drawn by their

* St. Paul's own phrase afterwards, "consenting unto his death" (xxii. 20), identical, as it is, with St. Luke's account (viii. 1), implies, of course, a hearty adoption of the side of Stephen's persecutors, rather than mere acquiescence.

† *Les Apôtres*, p. 145. The statement that the words ἀντὶ ἐκκλησίας mean a "proselyte," is, however, simply an obsolete inaccuracy. Neither in Luke ii. 25, nor Acts ii. 5, can it bear the meaning.

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special sympathy with Stephen's preaching. Greek word which St. Luke uses in this passage not that which he applies to such proselytes, a word identical with that with which he describes Simon in his Gospel (ii. 25). It seems, therefore, probable that these were devout *Jews*, distinguished by reverence,—as yet only half convinced, or only prepared to show their convictions,—acting towards the body of Stephen as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea had done to the body of our Lord, showing honour to the dead, though they had lacked courage to come to his rescue when he was living. To pay that honour was, in either case, a proof that their hearts had been kindled into an unworldly glow. In that of Stephen there was a special feature, which ought not to be passed over. It was the current feeling of the Jews at this time that lamentation was to be uttered over the body of one who had been stoned to death. None were to say "Ah, lord!" or "Ah, his glory!" He was to be "buried with the burial of an ass." Partly, of course, this carried to the extreme point the ignominy and shame which his crime deserved, partly, also, this very denial of funeral honours supposed to have something of an expiatory character, a penalty inflicted on this side the grave in order to avert or mitigate the penalty in the world to come.* And so this "great lamentation" was once a protest against the execution, and a declaration that those who lamented believed that there was no crime in the condemned man that required any such expiation.†

* Comp. Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebraic.*, in *loc.*

† A strange story (which may be found in Alban Butler's "1

It remains to note, lastly, the influence which the teaching and the death of Stephen exercised on the growth of the Church of Christ and on the character of her doctrine. (1) The persecution which, starting from him, became general, would fall, if not exclusively, yet at least chiefly, on those who were like-minded with him—the bolder, more liberal section of the Hellenistic Jews. The Galilaean Apostles, who seem to have accepted his work rather than co-operated with him, still remained in safety, apparently unmolested, at Jerusalem. From that time a more marked Hebrew character is manifest in the church there. It needs the special teaching of the history of Cornelius to lead it to dispense with the circumcision of Gentile converts. Even that was in danger of being looked on as a special exception to a law, not a representative example. St. Paul, when he came there seventeen years afterwards, could only

of the Saints," Aug. 3rd, or in the Appendix to vol. vii. of Migne's edition of Augustine) appeared about the end of the fourth century, as accompanying the "translation" of the relics of St. Stephen from Palestine to Ancona, Malta, and Africa. It purports to come from a priest named Lucian, and relates that the writer had seen in a vision the form of a venerable old man, who declared himself to be Gamaliel. He it was who had buried Stephen and other Christians. He bids Lucian go to the village where he had lived, Capharalgama, and tells him that he will there find his own body, and those of his son Abibas, who had become a disciple of Christ, and with them those of Stephen and Nicodemus. Lucian relates that he acted on the vision, and found a tomb on which were the four names, Chaliel, Nassaon, Gamaliel, and Abibabel. The two former names being interpreted as Aramaic equivalents for Stephanos and Nicodemus. The whole story, though referred to and accepted, with the addition of a long catalogue of relic miracles by Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xvii. 8; *Serm.* 318, 319; *Tract.* in Joann. 120), is in the worst style of legend; but this last touch of the two Aramaic names, seems to me to have about it a simplicity which suggests that it may be the nucleus round which the marvellous history has clustered. A man who was known as Stephanos (= garland) among the Hellenistic Jews, would naturally be called "Chaliel" among his Hebrew brethren.

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venture to communicate the Gospel which he pr
“privately,” in a secret conference, to the
apostles, who still guided it. The decree
council or assembly of Acts xv., as it was
partial assertion (valuable, indeed, as such,
way of compromise and conciliation) of the
ciples which St. Paul preached, so was it
hesitating, wavering approximation to the bo
with which Stephen had proclaimed that the
toms which Moses had delivered” were needles
would pass away. (2) The work of those who
most conspicuous among the refugees is of s
interest. Philip, Stephen’s fellow-worker amon
Seven, the only one of whose work we know
thing, carries on his labours first among the
Samaritans, with whom the Jews of Palestine
no dealings;” is then sent to the Ethiopian
lyte; then to the port of Casarea, where he v
be brought into constant contact with men of
races, and predominantly, of course, with Ro
His preaching must have become known there
clearly prepared the way for the conversion, and
more for the reception, of Cornelius. It would s
indeed, to have been the method, one might al
say the policy, of Philip’s work, to labour in a
field, upon which the Apostles, left to themse
were not likely to have entered, and then to bri
before them as a *fait accompli*, which they could
hesitate to recognise as a divine work. (3)
notice of the church’s mission-work, in Acts xi
20, has a special interest in this connexion.
majority of those who “were scattered abroad
the persecution that arose about Stephen,” trav
to Phœnicia and Cyprus and Antioch, “preac

the word to none but unto the Jews only." So far their work was simply a continuation of his, not an expansion. But "some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene,"—men, *i.e.*, who had been brought into direct, close contact, which, if not of antagonism, must have been of intimate fellowship, with Stephen; and "they, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the *Greeks*,* preaching the Lord Jesus." That work was the first true assertion of the church's catholicity. Those wandering refugees were the first evangelists of the Gentiles. It may be, for the chronology is left unfixed, that their work preceded even the conversion of Cornelius; but, even if it were after it in order of time, it was not like that apparently personal and exceptional, but wide and systematic. Through these unknown, unnamed teachers,† the disciples of Stephen, the work was done in earnest, for which he had offered up his life. Upon those "prophets" of the New Testament, not less than upon the "Apostles" themselves, the Church of Christ was to be built. (4) No study of St. Paul's character can be complete which fails to take into account the impression left on his life and teaching by the words and by the martyrdom of Stephen. True, not even they availed to slake the white heat of the persecuting spirit. He "kicked against the pricks" now, and resisted the promptings of pity and sympathy, perhaps also the latent half-conviction

* The Authorised Version gives "*Grecians*," *i.e.*, Hellenic Jews, but the balance of MSS. authority is clearly in favour of "*Greeks*" (= Gentiles). The sense, indeed, absolutely requires it.

† I have elsewhere (see the Study on SIMON OF CYRENE in volume) given my reasons for believing that that disciple must have been one of them. Andronicus and Junia (or Junias) must also be thought of. And this may be the explanation of St. Paul's words about them as "of note among the *Apostles*."

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that he was fighting against God, as he had : the "leadings" of the divine will, manifested conversion of Barnabas and the warnings of liel. Nothing less than the revelation to h soul of that Jesus whom he was persecuting lead him to the knowledge of the truth. Bu once led, the remembrance of that face, whi seemed "as it had been the face of an angel," have been ever present with him, humbling the dust in self-abasement, making him feel "chief" of sinners, "not meet to be call Apostle;" and yet, for that very reason, doin work of an Apostle more abundantly than all and that, too, in the very spirit in which St would have done it. Every accusation bi against the proto-martyr was afterwards bi against him. Every truth which Stephen preached came from his lips, developed and pleted. Echoes, even, of the martyr's very and phrases meet us again and again in the E of St. Paul.* If it be true that we owe the A to the prayers of the martyr, it is also true th martyr lived again in the Apostle. Men almost have said of him, "It is Stephen risen the dead; and therefore mighty works do show themselves in him." If it be the law of her gr that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the chu it was in the highest degree true here that the of the proto-martyr was as the "good seed," tined to bring forth a hundredfold in the harv the Church Universal.

* The examination of these parallelisms would be interesting but I have not here time to go into detail. Comp., as the striking instances, Acts vii. 48, with St. Paul's words at (Acts xvii. 24); and Acts vii. 53, with Gal. iii. 19.

III.

MANAEN.

“**M**ANAEN, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch.”* This is the one solitary record which the history of the Apostolic Church gives us of this man, and any attempt to go further must be in great measure conjectural. And yet it is hardly possible for one who reads with any thought, not to find a strange half-melancholy interest in this juxtaposition of the names of two men whose characters and lives must have been so strikingly contrasted. At the very time when the one foster-brother is mentioned by St. Luke, as prominent among the prophets and teachers of Antioch who ministered to the Lord, and sent out Paul and Barnabas to their first great mission among the heathen, the other was living in a dishonoured exile at Lyons, in the Roman province of Gaul,† in company with the temptress whose influence over him had been so fatal, with a dark past to look back upon, and, so far as we know, a hopeless future. Taken by itself, this fact alone suggests the

* Acts xiii. 1.

† Joseph. Ant. xviii. 8, 2. In the same writer's "History of the Jewish War," ii. 9, 6, Spain is given as the place of his exile; and this makes it probable that he ended his days in the more distant province.

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thought which the daily experience of life often brings before us, that the lives of men begin in the closest companionship, under as possible the same conditions, and yet that of one shall be peace, and holiness, and a chance incorruptible, and that of the other sorrow, and confusion. There is a self-determining power in the will which may over-ride all influences for good or evil, which may resist even the grace of God. "The one and the other left;" this is often all that we know or say. We see the diverging issues of death; the judgments of God which award often to us as a "great deep," and we can see the intermediate stages.

But in this case, the study of the history of the time, and more particularly of the Gospel of Matthew, suggests many pregnant hints, and helps to believe, by combinations and coincidences, not interest in themselves, and tending, as coincidences do, to a stronger and more settled conviction to fill up the outline. We shall be able, if I do not, with as much probability as circumstantial evidence admits of, to obtain a fairly distinct picture of the life of the foster-brother of the tetrarch.

1. Most commentators have noticed the fact that the name Manaen was connected with an early part of the history of the Herodian dynasty. Herod the Great was yet a boy, and his father was the Idumean, pushing himself into power over Hyrcanus, the last prince of the Asmonæan, and the cabee line of priestly rulers, there lived a man who bore that name.* Rigorous, ascetic,

* The narrative is given by Josephus, *Antiq.* xv.

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prayer and meditation, like the other members of that brotherhood, he was believed to possess also special gifts of prophecy. One day, meeting the young Herod as he went to school, and reading, it may be, in his features the signs of an insatiable ambition and an indomitable will, he clapped him on the back, and hailed him as "King of the Jews;" and when the boy disclaimed the royal title, told him distinctly of the power and greatness, the sins and punishments which should enter into his life. He stood, *i.e.*, in somewhat the same relation to him that Ahijah the Shilonite did to Jeroboam.* And as with the son of Nebat, so with the son of Antipater, the early prophecy was not forgotten. When he attained the summit of his power, and had won from friends and foes the title (*Herod the Great*) which till then had been borne only by Alexander and Pompey, he sent to fetch the aged seer from his devout retirement, and sought to know the length of life and power which he might yet count on, would fain have attached him to his court as a friend and counsellor, and ever afterwards honoured the Essenes above all other Jewish sects. So far we follow the narrative of Josephus. What the identity of name renders probable, is that on the refusal of the old man, the king transferred his offer of patronage (as David did from Barzillai to Chimham†) to his son, or grandson, and had him brought up as one of his own family, the companion of one of his favourite sons. If so, the first great event in the life of the teacher of Antioch must have been the change from the stern purity of the life of the Essenes to the pomp and luxury of the court of Herod. Soon this

* 1 Kings xi. 29—39.

† 2 Sam. xix. 37, 38.

would be followed by a yet greater change, and one not without interest in its bearing on the life of Manaen. Antipas and Archelaus were sent to receive their education at Rome,* and were thus brought into contact with heathen thoughts and habits. The foster-brother of the former would naturally share this training. He must have witnessed all the magnificence and the guilt of the later years of the elder Herod's reign, his passionate love, and fatal jealousy of Mariamne, his oppression and tyranny over his people, the execution of his best-loved son, Aristobulus. He may have heard of the arrival of the "wise men" from the East, and of the massacre at Bethlehem. He could not have been altogether ignorant of the wide-spread Messianic hopes which animated the people. A man like the elder Manaen must have been among those who, like Simeon, being "just and devout," looked for the "consolation of Israel." The very name which he bore, and which (on this hypothesis) he gave to his son (Menahem or Manaen, the *comforter*), bore witness of this hope.

2. In the common course of things in the East, one so brought up with the heir of kingly power would continue to be attached to his household in later years. He would eat at the king's table, be esteemed as the "king's friend," would have, in this way, an influence over him greater than that of his generals or officers of state, would often be employed on special service at home or abroad. The life of Manaen, if it were not an exception to the rule, must have been spent in this way; some thirty years or more passed, which are to us, in his life, as in that of the tetrarch, and many others of that time and

* Joseph. Antiq. xvii. 3.

country, all but a blank. It may be that he adopted the life and the principles of those with whom he lived, and took his place with those who were "gorgeously apparelled and lived delicately," "in kings' houses." He may have acquiesced, without a protest, in the king's incestuous marriage with the daughter of a deceased, and the wife of a living, brother. We can estimate, however, without much risk of error, the effect which the teaching of the Baptist must have had on one so situated. Here he saw a life, like in form (though more rigorous in its degree) to that Essene devotion which he had known in his youth, the re-appearance of the prophetic character, the protest of a Rechabite austerity against luxury and softness, the open and fearless speech, as of a new Elijah. If we find traces in the Gospels of the influence of the Baptist's teaching within the circle of Herod's immediate attendants, it is reasonable to think that he too must have come under it. If, as we shall see, there is reason to believe that much of St. Luke's history of the Baptist's work was derived from his report, the probability becomes almost a certainty. What these traces are, I now propose to indicate.

3. The "soldiers" of whom St. Luke speaks in chap. iii. verse 14, were literally "men on a march." And the war in which they were on service was that in which Herod had been involved with Aretas, king of Petrea, the father of the wife whom the tetrarch had divorced in order that he might indulge his guilty passion for Herodias.* The line of their march would take them down the valley of the Jordan, and so they would pass by the chief scene of

* Joseph. Antiq. xviii. 6, 1.

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the Baptist's ministry. Let us remember what the stoppage of that march involves testimony it bears to the might of the prophet over officers as well as men. The latter have halted without the permission of the prophet; they could hardly have presented themselves for such a command as the narrative implies they did, unless the prophet had commanded them to do the same. For that hour there must have been many among the courtiers of Herod who were numbered also, so openly, among the disciples of John.

4. The next trace meets us in the earliest of our Lord's ministry. We read in John that there was a "certain *nobleman*, whose son was sick at Capernaum," and "when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went to Him, and besought Him that He would come and heal his son." The word which our translators as "*nobleman*" means more specifically an attendant or follower of the king, *i.e.*, a title was popularly used in Galilee, of the *Antipas*. I do not, of course, assume the identity of this "*nobleman*" with the tetrarch's foster-son, but I point to it as one of the tokens of the Lord's work as "preparing the way of the Lord" among Herod's followers. The man thus designated came to Jesus with full confidence in his power to heal. With a faith almost equal to that of the centurion, he believed that his mere word was enough, without his presence. When he heard that at the self-same hour in which Jesus sought him, "Thy son liveth," the fever had indeed suffered the sufferer free, "himself believed, and his house." The circle of Herod's court now

some, at least, who were disciples, not of the Baptist only, but of the Prophet of Nazareth.

5. The imprisonment of John, though it sprang from the vindictiveness of Herodias and the cowardice of Herod, and interrupted his work among the people, brought him into yet closer contact with the tetrarch's immediate followers. Even Herod himself, as though some better influences were, for a time, acting on him, "did many things and heard him gladly," and "feared him," knowing him to be a "just man and a holy."* Those whose minds were not dragged downwards by lust and luxury must have yielded to the prophet's words with a more entire surrender. It is clear from the narrative of Matt. xi. 2, 3, that some, at least, of the Baptist's disciples were allowed free access to him, and went to and fro with messages between him and the greater One of whom he was the forerunner. What disciples were so likely to have that access as those who were themselves among the officers and attendants of the prince who had imprisoned him? If we believe, as we may well do, that every word which our Lord spoke at such a time was full of a deep and special meaning, we may find in that thought a probable explanation of what he said, as the Baptist's messengers were departing. "Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' houses." Primarily, doubtless, as I have shown elsewhere,† there was a reference here to the contrast between the half-renegade Herodian scribes, Sadducean in teaching,


* Mark vi. 20.

† Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. *Scribes*. See also "Christ and Christendom," p. 165.

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worldly and intriguing in their lives, and the severity of the Baptist's life, the yet nobler beauty of the life of Christ. But, on the supposition here suggested, the words may have had special significance for those very messengers who were then going back. *They* may have been between two opinions, swayed this way and that by old associations, now by new and nobler in waving to and fro, "like reeds shaken by the wind." It may have been necessary to remind *them* that true servants of God were to be found, not in "kings' houses," but in prison, or in the wilderness, preaching the gospel to the poor, living with the "common people" who "heard them gladly."

6. The traces of information derived from such channels such as I have pointed out now throw new light on the narrative of the circumstances of the Baptist's death. The narrative is given with a minuteness and vividness which could hardly have come from any but an eye-witness. There at the feast of "lords, high-priests, and chief estates of Galilee," must have been the "nobleman" of Capernaum, and the "stepson" of Herod's household, and the king's "foster-son and friend." After the fashion of the heat of the day which Antipas had adopted, his wife's husband submits, at her mother's prompting, to a degradation from which a true Israelite maiden would shrink, and comes in, before a company of dancing-girls, to minister to the voluptuous king and the revellers by a prostituted grace and beauty. (xiv. 1—12). The snare is set by one who knew that the bait was surest to attract the tetrarch's base passions, and he is taken captive by it irretrievably. He was among those who witnessed it when



and loved the Prophet that was thus sacrificed to a prince's lust and a woman's hate, they must have shuddered with an unimaginable loathing. It was no time for them to make their choice.

7. At or about this time, some at least did it. Others, it may be, lingered still, in the hope that the tetrarch's sorrow might be the starting-point of a true repentance. Among the former we may find the presence among those who followed the Master, and "ministered to Him of their substance," Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's stewardess. This she could hardly have done, according to Jewish law of property and marriage, without her husband's knowledge and consent. From her presence may have come the facts recorded by the first Evangelists, that when Herod heard of the word of Jesus he was "perplexed," and "said unto his servants,† This is John whom I beheaded, he is risen from the dead." They were likely to know the secret history of the enmity between Pilate and Herod, the promptings of a morbid curiosity (the morbid science being now seared) which led the latter to wait a long time to desire earnestly to see Jesus, ending at last in the brutal scorn and mockery with which he mocked Him, and in retaliation, with the "gorgeous robe," the Prophet-King who had condemned those that were gorgeously apparelled," and lived "in kings' houses."

8. It may be, and what has been noticed may be probable enough, that up to this point the Master's brother had continued faithful to the relation.

* Luke viii. 1—3.

† Matt. xiv. 2. The significance of this passage has been brought out in Blunt's "Scriptural Coincidences," iv. 10.

‡ Luke xiii. 1; xxiii. 12.

§ Luke xxiii. 11.

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which that name involved. But soon after (even if the guilt of that day had not been the outward course of events brought about by the rupture of it. The ambitious intrigues of the Herodian Agrippas (the Herod of Acts) slew James, the brother of John, with the help of Herodias, enabled him to secure the favour of Caligula, and that emperor permitted him to assume the disused title of king. This gave him of course, a higher dignity than that of his uncle, the tetrarch, and the pride of Herodias (sister to Antipater) both being children of the murdered Aristobolus was stung to the quick by this inferiority. Herodias again working on her husband's feeble will, she gave him no peace until he had taken the fatal step of leaving his tetrarchy, in the hope of obtaining the privilege of regal rank.* Like the nobleman in the parable, he "went into a far country to receive himself a kingdom and to return."† But the kingdom failed. Accusations of misgovernment, fomented in part by the discontent of his subjects, and in part by the secret communications of his nephew, Tiberius, induced the emperor to depose him. He had the mortification of seeing his tetrarchy merged in the kingdom of Agrippa, and was exiled first to Gaul and then to Spain. Thither, as has been said, he retired as the partner of his guilt, and we lose sight of him. The tradition that Pilate also was banished to the former province, suggests the probability that the two may have met once again there, to test the friendship which had been purchased at a terrible price.‡

* Joseph. Antiq. xviii. 8, 1.

† Luke xix.

‡ See Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," art. *Pilate*.

9. At or about this time we have the first actual mention of the man whose life has thus been half-conjecturally studied from the scanty materials of scattered hints and shadowy indications. And now he appears as foremost among the "prophets and teachers" of the church of Antioch. Unknown as he is to us, he stood then on the same level as Barnabas, in a higher position than St. Paul. Whatever his past life had been, it had led him to this. Through successive stages of the truth, faithful, we must believe, to the light given him in each, he had gone on till he too took his place among the light-bearers of the world, and the prophetic word in him was to the church in which he ministered as a light "shining in a dark place." But what calls, I think, for special notice, as showing the tendency of the Baptist's teaching, is the fact that he is found at Antioch, not at Jerusalem, in the mother church of the Gentiles, not in that of the Circumcision. The words of John, as he stood and pointed to the pebbles of the Jordan, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," contained by implication the whole Gospel of the calling of the heathen, and Manaen must have seen that they did so. At Antioch, too, he must have taken upon himself the new name which, we know, originated there. To one who had seen Antipas and Jesus face to face, or who had, at least, known them both, it must have been a joy unspeakable to cast off all connection with the *Herodiani*, to whom he had at one time outwardly or in heart belonged, and to take his place among the *Christiani* of the Syrian city. Little as he or any man could then know of the future glories of that name, he and his companions chose it as one

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that was for them above all names. And in things too; it would seem that he reproduce while he transcended, the type of his earlier. As in others, so in him, the prophetic form of an-ance which had reappeared after long centuries of desuetude when the voice of John was heard in the wilderness of Judæa, was powerful in the new evangelising. As the disciples of John fasted so he and those who were with him "fasted" they ministered to the Lord, and that solemn preparation was followed by new gifts of insight. His lips and theirs (as afterwards from the other prophets in the case of Timotheus) carried words which marked out the fittest labourers for new and mighty work: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called you." One who had begun with the training of an- and the teaching of the Baptist, now gave the hand of fellowship to the two new Apostles, "the Twelve," as they went forth to their work among the heathen.

10. To such a man, in any case, the Church, in its infancy, must have owed much alone (if we adopt the hypothesis which has been suggested above) of all the earlier teachers. The Church, may have sojourned in the great city, and learnt to yearn for the time when it should have its own Christ, and not Cæsar, as its master. From the Apostle of the Gentiles must have had encouragement and support in his great struggle against the Judaisers. There is, I believe, an indefinitely greater probability that the debt is even greater. The thing that we know of St. Luke (tradition and internal evidence in this case coinciding) in

that his life as a Christian must have begun at Antioch. He it is who records the first arrival of the preachers of the Truth in that city, the first adoption of the new Name, the prophecy of Agabus there, and the exertions of the Antiochene disciples to relieve the poverty of their brethren at Jerusalem,* the names of the prophets and teachers who were conspicuous there, but were little known, most of them, elsewhere. When the writer of the Acts unites himself with St. Paul, as at Troas,† it is clearly as one who had known and worked with him before. But, if so, then he must have known Manaen too. Among those whom he met with at Antioch, there must have been one, at least, of the "eye-witnesses" of much that he relates, from whose reports he professes to compile his Gospel. From him he may have learnt many of the facts of the history of the Baptist, some of those, the most characteristic of his Gospel, in the Galilæan and Peræan ministry of our Lord. Certain it is that of the features of his Gospel one of the most striking is the knowledge which he shows of the details of Herodian history, the fulness with which he narrates many things in that history which the other Gospels omit. He tells us, as we have seen, of the soldiers on their march, of the conversion of the wife of Herod's steward, of the tetrarch's desire to see Jesus, of the massacre of his subjects by Pilate, of the consequent enmity and later reconciliation of the two rulers, of the righteous scorn with which our Lord repelled the affected sympathy or fear of the Pharisees, "Go ye, and tell that fox."‡ He it is, again, who records the fact that the brother of Antipas, Philip, was tetrarch of

* Acts xi. 20, 26, 27.

† Acts xvi. 10.

‡ Luke xiii. 32.

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Ituræa and Trachonitis,* who gives us in f history of Agrippa's death,† and knows the r the chamberlain of his court. Of all expla that can be given of these facts, the most prob that the Evangelist came into contact with so who, being a Christian like himself, had at or lived much in the circle of Herod's followers, whom, therefore, all facts connected with that had an importance which they had not for Whatever interest may attach, as I said at t set, to the juxtaposition of the two names of M and Antipas, whatever thoughts of awe, fear, v for ourselves or others, it may suggest to 1 deepened and strengthened by this fuller The danger of the weak will—untrue to i convictions, and therefore losing them altoget keeping them only to its own condemnation power of earnestness and faith to triumph o temptations of outward circumstances and p companionship, are seen more clearly. Our in over and above this result, will, I believe, hav something to the conviction as we read the (that we are dealing, not with "cunningly fables," but with true histories, dropping after the manner of all true histories, natura incidentally, suggesting more than they te rewarding those who seek diligently with new into the facts which they record.

* Luke iii. 1.

† Acts xii. 20—

IV.

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IT is one of the characteristics of the history of our Lord's passion, that it brings lives and acts that would otherwise have passed away unknown and unremembered within the circle of its own surpassing glory. Every circumstance, every person connected with that divine event is, as it were, transfigured and immortalised. They can never be forgotten. The soldiers casting lots upon the vesture of the Crucified; the chief priests mocking; the two robbers, one persistent in his hardness to the last, the other repentant and forgiven; the centurion confessing that this was a "righteous man," the "Son of God;" the by-stander offering the sponge dipped in vinegar to quench the thirst of the sufferer; the soldier piercing the side of the already lifeless corpse—all these stand before the eyes of men for ever. We know nothing of their previous—nothing of their subsequent history. There is a moment of intense light in which the good or the evil which was in them is brought out as with marvellous clearness; but on either side there is a thick gloom which we seek in vain to penetrate.

The name which stands at the head of this paper may seem to come within the same group. The only

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fact which we connect with it is that it was one on whom the Jewish priests and people held, as he was "coming out of the country, whom they "laid the cross that he might follow after Jesus." It is inferred from this, inas- much as the common practice in such cases was that a condemned prisoner should carry his own cross, that the whole structure or the horizontal beam of the place of execution, that the long night of Gethsemane, and the cruel mockings and scourgings that had followed, had so exhausted the strength of the Sufferer, that those who were leading him to the "Place of a Skull," "outside the city," saw that in this case it was physically impossible to act on the usual rule, and therefore seized on the opportunity to substitute. In the popular pictorial representation of the history of the Passion, which the "Scriptures" of Roman Catholic churches have for centuries impressed on the mind of Europe, this inference has been, as it were, dramatised. Our Lord is fainting, fallen to the ground beneath the beam of the cross. Then, and not till then, is it inferred from the back that could no longer bear the cross, that it is placed upon another.

As we read these facts in the narrative of Matthew and St. Luke, they present some questions which it is not, at first, easy to answer. Of all those who are brought into this moment of contact with the great Sufferer, do the three disciples name Simon of Cyrene, and him only instead of taking one of the multitude to carry the cross round, does the mingled crowd of priests, and Levites, and attendants, and Roman soldiers seize on this opportunity? What made them fix on him for a task which

have seemed so ignominious and degrading? What effect was produced on the mind of him who was thus made, as by a constraint which he could not resist, "a witness of the sufferings of Christ," by all that he saw of the patience, holiness, meekness, love of the Son of Man? Here was one of whom it was literally true, as it never had been before, and never could be afterwards, that he took up his cross—yes, the very cross of Christ, and followed Him! Can we think of one who was thus led to so full a share in the glory and the shame of that day, and not wish to know whether he was the better or the worse for it? To be simply as he had been before, to let the routine of his life go on as it had done, with no fresh spring of awe, reverence, love, on the one hand, and yet with no increased hardness, scorn, hate, on the other, must, we may well believe, have been impossible.

The narrative of St. Mark, here, as in so many other instances, fuller—in spite of its general brevity—than that of the other Gospels, adding significant notices which we do not find in them, gives, in part, an answer to these questions. "They compelled," so he tells the story, "one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, *the father of Alexander and Rufus*, to bear his cross" (xv. 21). It is obvious that the two names are mentioned as being well known both to the writer and the readers, as giving the latter a new association with the less-known name of Simon. Those for whom St. Mark wrote had known, as conspicuous members of the society to which they themselves belonged, two sons of the man who bore the cross of Jesus. There is, one might almost say, an indirect appeal to their

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testimony. They had heard from their father that he had passed on Golgotha, and could bear witness whether the report which the Evangelist gave was true with it.

I am but following in the track of many others in suggesting the probable identity of the sons of Simon of Cyrene with a disciple whom St. Paul sends a message of specially warm greeting in Romans xvi. 13. "*Salute Rufus, and his mother, and mine.*" External and internal evidence converge to the conclusion that the Gospel of St. Mark was written in the first instance, as embodying the recollections of Peter, and for the disciples of that Apostle in the Church of Rome. In that church we find, among his foremost workers, "elect and called," not only "called" in the Lord, but "elect" as for high gifts and a special work, one of whom Mark's readers would know and honour. This one fulfils the conditions which were suggested by the mention of Rufus in the narrative of the Evangelist. Worthless as are the apocryphal books which profess to record the incidents of the apostle's life, there is a slight addition to the probability of the inference in itself sufficiently credible, from the fact that in that which bears the title of "*The Gospel of Andrew and Peter,*" both the names mentioned in St. Mark appear as among the Christians at Rome.

So far, then, we have every reason for supposing that the two sons of him whom we may well call the Cross-bearer, took their place in the fellowship of Roman disciples whom St. Paul mentions. With Priscilla, and Aquila, and Epæ-

Andronicus, with those who "laboured much in the Lord," and were "beloved in the Lord," steadfast in the faith, bringing forth the fruits of love, their names were written in the book of life. We are led almost irresistibly to the conclusion that he who bore the cross and witnessed the crucifixion became a believer in the Crucified; that he imparted this faith to those who were nearest and dearest to him in the ties of blood; that he and his were baptized, and that his sons, at least, devoted themselves to the work of ministering to the saints;—we should hardly err, looking to the place in which we find them, and the way in which they are spoken of, in saying—to the work also of evangelists.

This, however, is but the first step in the inquiry. We have to add—(1) that the way in which St. Paul mentions the Rufus of whom he speaks implies that he had known him personally, and felt towards him as a brother. But at the time when St. Paul wrote to the Christians of Rome he had never visited that city, and must, therefore, have been acquainted with him elsewhere. At Antioch, or Corinth, or Thessalonica, in some of the great centres of his apostolic activity, the two had met, and learnt to love each other. (2) But St. Paul's words imply another fact of even greater interest. "Salute," he says, "Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and *his mother, and mine.*" If the inference which has been drawn as to Rufus be legitimate, then this was none else than the wife or widow of Simon of Cyrene, and it is of her that the Apostle of the Gentiles writes as one who had shown a mother's love towards him, and to whom, therefore, he looked as with a son's reverence. In some time of need, in

some attack of the mysterious and painful disease from which he so frequently suffered, she, it may well be, had ministered to his necessities, and soothed the sharp hours of pain with a tenderness that he could not forget. If he thus knew and honoured the wife, he may well have known the husband.* He, too, if a convert, must have been a conspicuous one. We have enough—in the position which he occupied in the Church of Jerusalem, or elsewhere—to explain the prominence given to him in the narratives of the first three Gospels.

But, starting from these conclusions, we may ask, I believe, whether there is not an indefinitely strong probability that Simon of Cyrene was, even before the one incident which has made his name so memorable, among the circle, if not of disciples, yet of those who “believed secretly” that Jesus was a Teacher sent from God, though they shrank from confessing him as the Christ? This hypothesis at least supplies an explanation of some of the facts that seemed perplexing. All the avowed disciples of our Lord had forsaken Him and fled. If St. John had left the palace of the high priest to follow his Master to the place of execution, the fact that he was known to Caiaphas, which had protected him there, would protect him still. The Roman centurion, or the priests who for the time usurped his functions in arranging the details of the execution, did not dare to seize one of the crowd of their own partisans and compel him to undergo the ignominy of bearing the malefactor’s cross. But if, by a

* It is not without interest to remember, in this connexion, and as strengthening the probability of some intercourse between Simon and St. Luke at Antioch, the fact that Cyrene was famous for its physicians.

seeming casualty, there fell in their way, "coming from the country," and, therefore, unconscious of all that had passed since the Passover of the previous night, one whom they suspected of being a disciple, how natural, in that case, would it be that they should take the opportunity for wreaking their rage on yet another victim! He who had shrunk from an open confession of his faith was now made to take part in that procession, bearing the cross, as a rebel or a robber might bear it, exposed to the gaze of the multitude, listening to their gibes and scoffs, bearing, in very deed, the "reproach of Christ."

Can we believe, if this were so, that the circumstances which brought about such a result, and which afterwards bore such fruit, were indeed fortuitous? If the man who passed through that strange discipline were indeed one of those who believed in their hearts, but would make no confession with their lips, one who, like many of the "chief rulers" of whom St. John speaks, were disciples "secretly for fear of the Jews," "lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (xii. 42), loving the praise of men more than the praise of God, must we not believe that this was the very discipline which he needed? For such as he was the words had been spoken: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke ix. 23). "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" . . . "cannot be my disciple" (Matt. x. 34; Luke xiv. 27). If for a time such warnings passed unheeded, the time which brought with it a literal fulfilment of the words, without or against the will of the wavering disciple,

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must have helped to fix on his mind their significance, and, as the sequel showed, to in his life.

But the line of inquiry on which we have carries us yet further. The fact that Simon had thus been brought within the brotherhood of disciples connects itself with the history of expansion of the Apostolic Church. Cyrene, a Greek colony in Western Africa, had come into the conquest of Carthage, under the power of Rome, and, as with most other commercial cities of the Empire, it had attracted a considerable Jewish population. The first settlers of that race had come from Alexandria by Ptolemy Lagus. They multiplied and prospered, occupied a district of their own, and were about one-fourth of the population. They were numerous and powerful in the time of Sylla, to make him send Lucullus to suppress an insurrection there, at the time he was pressing on with all his forces to the Mithridatic war. They were in the habit of sending contributions to the Temple at Jerusalem, and had been hindered in this by some of their townsmen, obtained a special edict from Augustus authorising them to continue it. Like all the cities of Western Africa, its people were in frequent course with Rome. Pilgrims from the "Libya round about Cyrene" were present, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 10), at all the great festivals at Jerusalem. They were important enough to have a synagogue in that city, either for themselves or in conjunction with the Jews (freedmen, *i.e.*, emancipated Jews from Rome). Alexandrians, and those of Cilicia and

They belonged, as this enumeration shows, to the division of Hellenistic or Greek-speaking Jews, to whom St. Stephen's teaching was mainly directed, and with whom Saul of Tarsus (though also a Hebrew of the Hebrews) was mainly associated. In the case of the Cilician zealot, we know that that teaching, though it raised him to the intense white heat of the persecuting spirit at first, was afterwards reproduced and expanded in many different ways. If there were any of the Jews of Cyrene who had been at all drawn towards the faith of Christ previously, the work may well have gone on among them with greater rapidity, and with no intervening paroxysm of opposition. It is at all events noticeable that they are among the foremost labourers in carrying on St. Stephen's work to its legitimate conclusion, and are the first, together with those of Cyprus (here, of course, we trace the influence of Barnabas), in opening the "door of faith" to the Gentiles. "They which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only" (Acts xi. 19). So far, *i.e.*, they kept within the limits which had bounded the work of the Apostles at Jerusalem before the great crucial instance of the conversion of Cornelius. But then came the stage of expansion: "And some of them were men of Cyprus and *Cyrene*, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks (*i.e.*, the uncircumcised heathen population), preaching the Lord Jesus." Here, accordingly, we have Cyrenian disciples active in the foundation of the Church of the Gentiles. The work which they begin is carried on by Bar-

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nabas. After a short interval of time, he Tarsus to seek Saul, and returns with him to Here, accordingly, it is beyond all question Apostle of the Gentiles would come into fellowship with Jewish Christians of Cyrene minded with himself, taking the same view of conditions of salvation and the law of the life. The facts which came before us at make it, in a very high degree, probable that Christians may have included Simon and A and Rufus. Here, then, may have begun intimacy which utters itself in the salutation Epistle to the Romans. Here, Mark the Evangelist's son to Barnabas, who was working in the same city with those Cyrenian teachers, may have become personally acquainted with the two Simon whom he names, and have learnt from himself the part which he took in the process of the Calvary. Here the Apostle of the Gentiles have found in the new sympathy and love on him that which made him feel that natural relationships which he had lost received a hundred-fold.

One of these Cyrenian teachers steps a little afterwards into fuller prominence. Among the prophets of the Church of Antioch, eager to enter the Gentile Church, ministering to the Lord and with their hearts set, in eager desire and devotion, on that special work, we find with Saul and Manaen, two others, "Simon was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene." It can hardly be a doubt that the latter was one of those who had begun the good work, and carrying it on to its completion; one,

whose heart and soul were in entire sympathy with St. Paul. And if so, remembering how others in that company gave themselves to the work of evangelists in distant lands, it will not seem strange to find Lucius also as a fellow-worker with the Apostle of the Gentiles. One of that name is, at all events, with him when he writes the Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 21), and is spoken of in the same tone of affection as Rufus had been, as one of his "kinsmen," bound to him (the mention of Jason and Sosipater, one of Thessalonica and the other of Beroëa, seems almost to exclude natural relationship) by some special ties of spiritual affinity, even as the mother of Rufus was his mother also.

The name of "Simeon called Niger" suggests a more striking, though a more precarious identification. For the two forms, Simon and Simeon, were (as we see in Acts xv. 14; 2 Peter i. 1) interchangeable, and the epithet Niger might be applied naturally enough to one who came from Africa. On the other hand, it must, however, be remembered that the name was one of the most common then current among the Jews of all countries, and the name of Simon of Cyrene would probably have been mentioned by St. Luke in the second part of his history in the same form as in the first. If I were to hazard any conjecture, it would be rather that the presence of the one Simon made it necessary to distinguish the other partly by the fuller form of the name, and partly by a distinguishing epithet.

It may be added, as one step further in the chain of coincidences, that the traditional accounts of St. Mark's missionary work represent him as laying the

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foundation of the Christian Church in the provinces of Libya. Taken by itself, suggestion is, of course, worth very little; but in connection with all that has been brought forward to connect the nephew of Barnabas with the disciples from that province, it can at least claim the credit (not always due to such traditions) of being in harmony with the acknowledged Scripture.

ST. PAUL AND THE SISTERHOOD AT
PHILIPPI.

IT has been remarked by almost every commentator on the Epistle to the Philippians, that of all the churches which St. Paul had founded, it was on this that his thoughts rested with the most entire satisfaction. From first to last there is not one word of censure. It breathes throughout the spirit of thankfulness and joy. In no other Epistle does the writer so often speak to those whom he addresses as his "beloved." He remembers them in every prayer, in every thanksgiving. From the "first day," until the time when he writes, their fellowship in the Gospel had filled him with the hope that God, who had begun so good a work, would also bring it to perfection (i. 5, 6). The influence to which all this was owing has not, I think, been recognised with equal clearness, and in placing the title which I have chosen at the head of this paper, I wish to indicate my belief that the church of Philippi has, in addition to other points of interest, this special characteristic,—that we are able to trace in it the way in which the new faith preached by the Apostles told in the first instance upon the hearts and lives of women,

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and through them, and in proportion to their gained the power of attracting men by its beauty. It is hardly, I believe, an undue tention of the phraseology of a later period to those who were thus working in the cause o as a *sisterhood*, bound together, if not by r vows, yet by the consciousness of a common

1. It will be remembered that as this was European city in which St. Paul had b witness, so also it was, more entirely than a city which he had visited, free from the ac of a Jewish element in its population. In th which had drawn the Apostle thither, together as it did with impulses which he re as coming from a Spirit higher than his own no child of Abraham, but a "man of Mac the representative of western heathenism, v saw pleading as with outstretched hands, over and help us" (Acts xvi. 9). And v arrived at Philippi with Silas and Timothy St. Luke, they found no synagogue which th take, as they had done in most Asiatic citie starting-point of their labours. In any c would imply that there were very few Jew dents there. If we believe that the rule Jewish rabbis, that there should be a sy wherever there were ten householders, was o in Europe as in Palestine, it would enabl estimate how few. It would appear, inde there were absolutely none. When the p go to that river-side, at which (as at Ro elsewhere) "prayer was wont to be made,' absence of a building set apart for the purp spake unto "*the women who resorted thither*

xvi. 13). They do not seem, though it was the Sabbath day, to have found a single Jewish listener of the other sex. It seems to follow from this that the women themselves were not Jewesses. Had they been so, they would hardly have been there without their brothers, their fathers, or their husbands. Of the only one who is named, indeed, and whom we may fairly look upon as representing the others, we are distinctly told that she "worshipped God" (Acts xvi. 14), *i.e.*, according to the established sense of that phrase, that she was a Gentile proselyte, who had come in contact with the faith of Israel and had renounced idolatry.

2. The question how they had advanced thus far, in the absence of any Jewish teachers at Philippi, is one which we can only answer conjecturally. The explanation is, I believe, to be found in the two facts, (1) that Philippi was a Roman colony; (2) that the decree of Claudius, commanding the Jews to depart from Rome, had been but recently issued. Consisting, as a "colony" of this kind, of comparatively recent foundation, necessarily did, of families who came from Rome, and kept up, more or less, their old relations with it, it might well contain those who had there become acquainted with the Jews—whose very zeal and success in making proselytes, especially among the women of the upper classes, had been one, at least, of the causes of their expulsion. And it is, I think, probable enough, looking to the *régime* which identified the Roman "colony" with the mother city, so that the laws of the one were the laws also of the other, that the edict of Claudius had been acted on, with more or less rigour, at Philippi. In other cities, not so identified, Judaism might still

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be a "*religio licita*," a lawful, tolerated had ceased to be so in Rome, and, by parity in the cities which were constitutionally parts of Rome. Philippi is the one city the precise ground of accusation against the preachers is, that they "being Jews, do ex trouble our city, and teach customs" (they draw no distinction between Jewish and customs) "which are not lawful for us to neither to observe, *being Romans*" (Acts xvi). If this were so, then its effect would be to ex Philippi even the few Jews who had been ti viously, and so would explain their entire from the scene when the Apostle's labours b

3. The first convert there was Lydia, th seller, of Thyatira. It may be noted in co with her presence there, that that city w originally a Macedonian colony; that here, intercourse between the mother country families of the emigrants was likely to be l Some form, more or less complete, of Jud Orientalism had found its way there, and out walls there stood a shrine which contained w known as the Chaldean court, and was dedi the Jewish or Chaldean Sibyl that bore th of Sambatha.* Lydia herself belonged to t of the dyers of the purple for which the ci Miletus and other towns, was famous. The seem, from inscriptions which they have left, been a wealthy body. The business required Everything seems to indicate that Lydia was comparatively rich. She is the hea

* Comp. the article *Thyatira* in Dr. Smith's "Diction Bible," by Mr. Blakesley.

numerous household, possibly men and women working under her orders. She receives St. Paul and his three companions as guests. Her house becomes the meeting-place of the brethren (Acts xvi. 15, 40). She could hardly have been the only, though she may well have been the chief, convert in that company of women by the river-side. We may see in her and her companions those who were the first-fruits of the church, likely to exercise as much influence there as Priscilla did at Corinth, or Ephesus, or Rome.

4. The incident of the girl possessed with "a spirit of divination" strikes us commonly only on its wonderful and supernatural side. But let us think for a moment what such a description implies. Whatever view we take of the cause, the effect was, that she, with her morbid, excited temperament, with every nerve in extreme tension, and subject to paroxysms of wild prophetic fury, was precisely in the state which is most susceptible to religious impressions. She, too, listens to the preaching of the Apostle, and her heart also is opened. She catches, convulsively, spasmodically, at the thought that here there is "a way of salvation" from the misery in which she found herself. She is drawn, "day by day," to the same spot, listening to those whom she recognises as "servants of the most high God,"* proclaiming her faith in the wild, frenzied manner which belonged to her condition. The words of the

* It will be noticed that the possessed girl uses the self-same Divine Name, "the Most High God," as that which we find uttered by the demoniacs of Palestine in the Gospel history (Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28). This implies clearly that she had come in contact with teaching of some kind higher than the popular Polytheism of Greece. For the history of that Name and its special significance at this period, compare Study II., O. T., in this volume.

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Apostle, indeed, spoken to the evil spirit, and bade thee in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from her," brought calmness and peace to her" (xvi. 16—18). The morbid excitement passed. Are we to believe that those words also re-awakened her faith? Does not the analogy of evil spirits of healing performed upon demoniacs in the New Testament history warrant the belief that they were strengthened while they sobered it? L. Magdalene, "out of whom went seven devils," had been, *i.e.*, not (as we often think) a devotee against purity, but in this frenzied demoniac she, too, would be eager to devote herself to the service of whom she had found deliverance. All that made her valuable in the eyes of her master was gone from her, and it would not be difficult for one who wished, to help her to obtain her strength even if she were not cast adrift as useless.

5. I pass over the history of the Philippians, noting only what we should note, if such a case occurred in the missionary work of our own day. In Madagascar or Japan, that here too, the keeper of the prison and his household members of the new community would minister to them distinctly and directly in two ways. It would make of him a preacher of the faith to those, the criminals, with whom his office brought him contact. It would open a wide sphere of work to those who had learnt the new law of life in ministering to them that were "sick or in sorrow," as they were ministering to their Lord. If the work at Philippi consisted mainly, as we have seen, of these devout women, it would be just as much a sphere of work as they would welcome.

Luke's continued presence there (and everything seems to indicate that he stayed after St. Paul's departure, and remained till he returned some seven years later*), the presence of the "beloved physician" no less than of "one whose praise was in the Gospel in all the churches"† must be thought of (if we would judge once again of the mission work of the first century as we judge of that of the nineteenth) as especially likely to foster these ministrations. If we remember what prominence he gives in his Gospel and in the Acts, to what one might almost call the communistic element of the life of the first disciples,‡ what special mention he makes of the women who followed Jesus, and ministered to Him of their substance (Luke viii. 2, 3), of Dorcas and her clothing club for the poor of Joppa (Acts ix. 36—39), of the daily ministration to the widows at Jerusalem (Acts vi. 1), we shall not wonder that his influence should be traced in a society such as the Philippian church. Certain it is that the hints dropped here and there indicate that it was composed mainly of the lower *strata* of society, of mechanics, small traders, slaves, and that these continued, so far as we can trace the church at all, to be predominantly Gentile. When

* I refer, of course, to the cessation of the first person plural in the narrative after St. Paul's departure from Philippi (Acts xvii. 1), and to its re-appearance when he returns there (Acts xx. 2).

† 2 Cor. viii. 18. The identification is, of course, not certain, but it seems to me far more probable than any other. The date of St. Luke's Gospel was probably, it is true, later; and it is questionable how far the word "gospel" was then applied to a narrative of our Lord's life. On the other hand, Luke had been doing the work of an evangelist in the wider sense, he was the natural representative of the Philippian church, he had been chosen to travel with St. Paul. He fulfils all the conditions of the case far more completely than either Trophimus, or Tychicus, or Aristarchus.

‡ Luke iii. 11; ix. 3; x. 4; xii. 33; xvi. 11; xviii. 22; xix. 8; Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 32—34.

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they contributed to the relief of the Christians of Jerusalem, their liberality still the more brightly because it was contrasted with their "deep poverty" (2 Cor. viii. 1). Paul writes to them, eleven years later, his salutation to the "saints that are at Philippi, the *Bishops* and Deacons" (Phil. i. 1), i.e., of the two words which were then synonymous with the same office, not "presbyters" or "elders," which came to the Christian church from the constitution of the Jewish synagogue, but "overseers," "superintendents," the name which belonged to the organization of the Imperial Government in its Greek and Eastern provinces. In all explanations of the application of the name to the same persons, this is the most satisfactory itself, and the most in harmony with all the facts with which we have to deal, and the recent instance confirms the conclusion already drawn from other *data* as to the almost exclusively German character of the Philippian church.

6. The subsequent history of that church presented a contrast in many ways to that of the others. They alone "communicated" with the Apostle "as concerning giving and receiving." Twice while he was at Thessalonica they made contributions towards the expenses of his mission (Phil. iv. 15, 16). They continued their liberality when he was at Corinth. And 1

* The fact of their being synonymous is seen at once by comparing (1), Acts xx. 17, 28, where St. Paul sends for the *elders* of Ephesus, and then speaks to them as overseers or *bishops*; (2), Titus i. 5, 6, *elders* are to be appointed in every city, under certain conditions, "for a *bishop* must be blameless." The distinction of the two "bishops and deacons" without any third order, of course, decisive as to the absence of a third order.

turn, as with a courtesy yielding to their strong affection, relaxed in their favour the rule on which he commonly acted, of receiving no payment in money or in kind from the churches which he had founded. He incurred, it would seem, in consequence, some ill-will at the hands of the Corinthian disciples, who complained that he was too proud to accept their offerings, and yet could bring himself to accept those of the Macedonians (2 Cor. xi. 7, 8).

7. The seeming strangeness of the absence of any Philippian names from the list of those who were sent as delegates of the western churches to accompany St. Paul to Jerusalem, is of course explained by the fact that St. Luke himself (whose presence is indicated by the reappearance of the pronoun "we" in the narrative at this stage) was that delegate, sent now on this errand, as he had, probably, been sent before on one of a like nature, to the church of Corinth.

8. For a time—during the imprisonment at Cæsa-rea, and the voyage to Italy, and the winter at Melita—we find no traces of any further intercourse. They had not, indeed, forgotten their spiritual father. They were still "careful," but they "lacked opportunity" (Phil. iv. 10). But when he was settled at Rome the opportunities were renewed, and we have indications that they were used to the full. Their "care for him flourished again." They heard of the hardships he had to undergo at Rome, and they sent Epaphroditus with their gifts to relieve them (Phil. iii. 25). Messengers brought back to Philippi the tidings that the faithful delegate they had thus sent had been seized with a sickness which brought him "nigh unto death," the consequence, in some way or

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other, of his zeal in the work of Christ. He came back to him, as he was regaining strength from the news that those tidings had caused in the church so great that he was oppressed with the anxiety of having caused it (Phil. ii. 26—30). To relieve his sorrow, the Apostle sends him with the letter in which we learn these facts. He looks forward to seeing yet once again those whom he loved so dearly, every one of whom was in his heart whom he longed, as in the very heart of the church (Phil. i. 8, 26; ii. 24).

9. All this emotional element in the relationship between St. Paul and the Philippians fits in with the conclusions that have been drawn from the predominant influence in it. But we are not to reduce this matter to mere inference or hypothesis. A few personal salutations which the Apostle sends to the two names which first meet us are those of Syntyche, whom he beseeches to be reconciled to his mind." Then, it may be, as in the experience of other sisterhoods, some difference of temper or opinion between those who were zealous in the same work had threatened to pass into a quarrel. He appeals to some unnamed teacher, a "true yoke-fellow" to help those *women* who laboured with him, the Apostle, in the work. Those who had most shared his actual work as an evangelist were not the bishops and deacons, but devout women, who, in his several visits to the church, had put themselves under his direction. We must not, we may find in one passage, the occasion of which has not hitherto, I believe, been noticed, an allusion to the active benevolence of those two whose names have already met

in writing to Philemon, St. Paul plays upon the meaning of the name of the runaway slave Onesimus (*the useful*) as that of one who had before been "unprofitable," but was now "profitable" to his master (Philemon 10, 11), so we may find a like playful and graceful *paronomasia* here. He speaks of the gifts which the Philippians had sent him as being "an odour of a sweet smell" (ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας) (Phil. iv. 18). It was, of course, a natural description enough in any case; but if we remember that one of those who were most prominent in all works of love herself bore the name of *Euodia*, or "Fragrance," we shall see that in this instance there was a special aptness and, so to speak, piquancy in its use. The gift which he had received came to him as with "sweet" memories from her whose name was "sweetness."*

10. There are good grounds for believing that the Apostle's hope that he should see his beloved Philippians once again was not unfulfilled, and we can also, I believe, trace the influence of this sisterhood and its organization in his later writings. Assuming, with nearly all the better commentators on the Pastoral Epistles, that the first Epistle to Timothy was written between his two imprisonments at Rome,

* The remarks in the text are traced upon the so-called received reading which makes the name *Euodia*. *Euodias*, which would be a masculine form, is one of the instances in which the Authorised Version is inferior in accuracy to both the Geneva and the Rhemish translations which preceded it, and which give the forms "*Euodia*" and "*Euchodia*" respectively. The strange insertion of the guttural "ch" in the latter had appeared before in Wiclif, and some MSS. of the Latin Vulgate. Many of the better MSS., however, give it with a short "o," *Euodia*, and this would have a different meaning, the "prosperous" one, "one in the right way." But even if this were the true name, the change would be so slight as quite to come within the legitimate license of a *jeu de mot*.

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we may call to mind that when he wrote but a short while before been journeying from Ephesus to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3); and in the common order of travel, Philippi was the first halting-place. May we not believe the rules which he lays down so emphatically for the organization of women's labour in the churches (rules obviously new, at least in the time of Timotheus and the church over which he was ministering) were based upon what he had seen in the working of that Philippian church where the organization was so prominent? Whether this were so or no is at all events gather from the Pastoral Epistles that such an organization was. It was not meant, for instance, to interfere with the duties and the life of the family. The very name of the order was known, that of the "widows," that those who formed it had lost the tie which bound them to the world. As long as they had the means they maintained themselves from their own or by their own labours, or those of others, and devoted themselves to the work of bringing up the young, visiting the sick, clothing the naked, "washing the saints' feet," receiving, that is, the Christian's offerings, and ministering to his wants. At the age when they were entered on the register of the church they were entitled (in the absence of any children or children able to support them) to a maintenance out of the church's funds (1 Tim. v. 3—16). They were then to be looked on as devoted to prayer and fasting night and day." The name seems then to have been used with a wide latitude of application. There were (1) the "widows indeed" above sixty, and living lives of

(2) those under that age, and still in the full activity of service; (3) the younger widows whom St. Paul counsels Timothy to reject, for whom he expressed the wish that they would "marry and bear children."

11. As far as the words go, there are no traces here of any organized work (such as we read of a little later in the post-apostolic age*) for women who were still unmarried. It may be that none such were at that time admitted into the list. I incline, however, as to a more probable hypothesis, to the belief that this name, like so many others, was at first wide enough to take in these also, and that these were those whom St. Paul had chiefly in view in the wish just referred to. He would scarcely, we may believe, have counselled a "widow" in the strict sense of the term to marry again, and so to forfeit all chance of the pension for old age, which was given only to those who had been the wives of one husband (1 Tim. v. 9).

12. Here our knowledge of St. Paul's relations to the Philippian sisterhood ceases altogether. But we have very clear and interesting evidence that it continued its work there. When Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, wrote to that church in the second century, he exhorted the "*widows*" to be sound in the faith, incessant in their prayers, true to their calling. They are to be, each of them, as holy as an altar of God (c. 4). And then the necessity for drawing a distinction between the classes that had all gone by one common name had led to a change in the terminology. At Philippi, as a little

* Tertullian (*De Virg. Veland.*, c. 9) mentions one instance of a "virgin" admitted at the age of twenty into the ranks of the "widows."

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later at the churches of Western Africa and others, we read of "virgins" as well as (c. 5).^{*} The Epistle of Ignatius to the Laodiceans is beyond all question spurious, and, though no value can be attached to its testimony here. Indirectly, however (as a forger would be obliged to adapt his work to the circumstances of the original), it is interesting to note that the writer who commemorates the martyr of Antioch, sends his salutations to "the company of the *virgins* and of the *widows*."

13. I notice, lastly, a coincidence a little certain, but not, I think, less striking. Paul sends his salutations to the women who worked with him in the Gospel, he couples with the name of "Clement and other his fellows whose names were in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). It has been a long-standing tradition that none other than the Clement of Rome who wrote us two epistles to the church of Corinth, the first, at least, is genuine, and to whose ascribed other writings undoubtedly spurious name was, indeed, too common to be a ground of identification, but the facts, so far as they go, fit in with it. As St. Paul's mention shows, his work at that time was chiefly at Rome. If we suppose him to have been permanently there, he would yet, as the language of the Epistle of the demoniac girl shows, be in the fullest sense the word, a "Roman," by virtue of the "right of that city, and this would explain

^{*} The words, however, are not very definite, and refer to unmarried women generally, not to such as enrolled under that title for labours of love in the cause of Christ.

(1) that he wrote in Greek, not Latin, and (2) that it was to the church of Corinth (between which and Philippi there had been such constant intercourse in the Apostle's lifetime) that this epistle was addressed. And if this be a permissible hypothesis, then the stress which he too lays on the service of devoted women, and on their heroic endurance of suffering and hardship in the work of Christ, has something of the same kind of groundwork as that which we find in Polycarp. Even the perplexing words which have been the torment of commentators, in which Clement refers in glowing phrase to the heroic acts of "Danae and Dirce,"* in bearing witness to the truth, may perhaps refer to some of those who had gathered by the river-side at Philippi, and had afterwards been called on to suffer (as St. Paul's language implies they did) as well as labour for the faith.†

* Clem. Rom., 1 Cor. c. 6.

† I gladly refer those who wish to pursue this inquiry further to the Introduction to Dr. Lightfoot's masterly "Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians."

VI.

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA.

AMONG the subordinate workers of the Apostolic Church, there are two who occupy a more prominent position than the two whose lives and characters have been taken as the subject of this paper. It is of the very nature of the case that much of what we have said of them should have been already said. I shall be satisfied if I remind some reader of facts they knew already, and bring before the eyes of others some facts, and inferences from facts, which may be, are altogether new to them.

The first mention of the two names with which we come in contact is in Acts xviii. 1, 2: "Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and there met him a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who came from Italy, with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome); and came unto them; and because they were of the same craft, he abode with them, and ministered unto them: for by their occupation they were tent-makers. Some facts of interest have to be noticed in connection with each of these particulars.

I. The name Aquila meets us about three centuries of a century later (*circ.* A.D. 130), in the time

Emperor Hadrian, as belonging to another. Aquila, who translated the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, aiming at a more literal accuracy than that of the Septuagint, was also a native of Pontus. The latter is said to have been a heathen by birth, to have made profession of Christianity for a time, and finally to have become a proselyte to Judaism, and received the rite of circumcision. The history suggests, at least, the probability of some connection between the earlier and later bearers of the name. When St. Peter writes his letter to the Jews of the Dispersion, those in Pontus stand first in order (1 Peter i. 1), and it would have been alike natural for the first Aquila to do the work of an evangelist in his own country, and for his name to have been adopted by those who owed their conversion, directly or indirectly, to his teaching. The name itself had been borne by a conspicuous member of an illustrious Roman house (Aquila Pontius, one of the murderers of Julius Cæsar), and so might have come to be adopted by others.* On the other hand, it furnishes an interesting instance at an early date of a practice that afterwards became common, that is, the adoption by Jews who were settled among the heathens of the names of *animals* instead of those which gave direct evidence of Israelitish origin. Wolff, Bär (Bear), Hirsch (Stag), Adler (Eagle, the exact equivalent of Aquila), are familiar instances of this.

The question whether this Aquila were a Christian at the time when St. Paul came in contact with him, has been much debated. On the one hand it has

* The suggestion that we ought to think of Aquila as belonging to the Pontian *gens*, instead of being of Pontus by birth, has little to recommend it.

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been urged that, if he had been, the name would have named him as a disciple; on the other hand, if he had not been, there would have been no mention of the case of Lydia (Acts xvi. 14) and Crispus (xviii. 8), some mention of the fact of his conversion and his baptism. So far the probabilities are nearly balanced. But to this must be added, first, the unlikelihood of an unbeliever receiving a man like St. Paul into his household and coming to be, as such, on terms of intimate companionship with him; and second, the improbability of the events that preceded the arrival of Aquila.

II. These are given us, partly in St. Luke's account already quoted, partly in the account of the emperor's policy given by Suetonius in his life of Claudius. It formed part of the policy of that emperor to suppress religions that were of remoter origin and more mysterious and unintelligible. He endeavored to suppress the Eleusinian mysteries from Attica, and the Bacchic ritual in Gaul. He also, as the historian says, "expelled the Jews from Rome, because of frequent riots that took place among them, under the leadership of Chrestus" (c. xxv.). I do not know of a long series of scholars and commentators who have maintained this view from the seventeenth century downwards,* in spite of the fact that more than at first meets the eye. For the history of the centuries of the history of Christianity,

* This view is taken, e.g., by Pitiscus in his edition of the Acts, on the authority of yet earlier scholars. I do not, of course, mean to suppress the fact that there are others who think differently and maintain that the name has no more significance than that of Marcus, or Caius.

conversation and in written documents, the name of the founder of the new religion was perpetually spelt in this way, *Chrēstus*, and not *Christus*, and the followers were CHRESTIANI, not *Christiani* (Tertullian, *Apol.*, c. 3; Lactant., *De vera Sap.*, iv. 7). It is perfectly incredible that any Jew would have called himself *Christus* unless he had claimed to be the Messiah, as incredible that any one would have taken a name so certain to have been identified with Messianic claims as *Chrestus*. The true explanation follows almost as a thing of course. The Jewish quarter at Rome had been disturbed by frequent disputes in which the name of the Christ had been bandied to and fro. Some had been claiming the title of Messiah for One whom they followed; others had rejected the claims which were thus urged on them. The contest broke out into open violence. It seemed to the emperor's counsellors, actuated by the suspicion and dislike with which Roman statesmen for the most part looked on all Oriental creeds that lay outside the horizon of their knowledge, a wise measure of police to banish both parties, to get rid of a people whom they at once feared and hated.

What more natural explanation of these facts can be given than that which is suggested by the history of the preaching of the Gospel in other cities of the empire? At Damascus, at Antioch in Pisidia, at Lystra, at Iconium, at Thessalonica, at Bercea, at Corinth itself, wherever Jesus was preached to the Jews as the Christ, the result was that "some believed and some believed not," and that the latter tried by slander, false accusation, open violence, to crush the former. And when we remember the constant intercourse between Rome and the other cities of the

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empire, between the Jews of Rome and t Palestine; when we take into account t the listeners on the day of Pentecost the journers of Roman origin ("strangers of" would seem almost impossible that no tid new sect, no preachers of the new faith, s reached the imperial city, quite certain t had come, the immediate result would be would be discord and debate, "five in divided, three against two, and two again

But if so, then Aquila's position as one banished from Rome would be that of or had the momentous question whether Jesu Christ brought before him, and could h remained neutral. If, when he comes with an apostle of that Jesus, preaching t its boldest and least Jewish form, he at c nises with him, if (with no mention m change in the interval) he is afterwards most zealous preachers and supporters surely enough to warrant the conviction t avowed his belief before. We may see member of the earliest Christian congreg capital of the empire. So far as we follow of the New Testament, *the Jew of P stronger claim to take his place among the the Church of Rome than either St. Peter* . In the long list of salutations which St. to that Church before his own visit there of Priscilla and Aquila stand first in orde there were no members of it more promine were. If they occupied such a position returned to that city, it is natural to infi occupied one analogous to it before their

III. We are now prepared to examine the questions which connect themselves with the wife of Aquila. Her name, Priscilla, or, as it meets us in the better MSS. of 2 Tim. iv. 19, and Rom. xvi. 3, Prisca, was that of one of the most illustrious families of Rome. In the long list of those who bore it in its masculine form, Priscus (as we find them, *e.g.*, in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of Classical Biography"), we meet with every variety of official rank: consuls, legates, prætors, quæstors, knights. If we found the feminine name in any chapter of Tacitus or Suetonius, the natural inference would be that she was related by birth or adoption to some member of the *gens* (the house or clan) of these Prisci. There is no instance that I know of, of its being borne by a woman of Jewish origin.

There would be nothing strange in the fact of one so connected embracing either Judaism or Christianity. From the time of Augustus onwards, the Jews of Rome had been successful in the work of proselytising. It became almost a fashionable weakness to keep new moons and sabbaths. What had been the Grove of Egeria was (later, if not already) let out to them as an oratory. They did a large amount of business as soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. Women, in the superstition which rises out of the absence of a true faith, came specially under their influence. The desire to stop this kind of proselytism was one motive in the steps taken by the emperors to expel or coerce the Jewish residents in Rome.

About this time too (A.D. 57), the remarkable case of Pomponia Græcina, accused vaguely (under Nero) of adopting some "foreign superstition," which was

apparently distinct from Judaism, and acquitted by her husband after a formal trial (such as Roman law permitted), in the presence of his and her relations, indicates that a new religion, feared and suspected, was making its way into the upper ranks of society. It may probably serve as an instance of the way in which men were sometimes won, "without the word," by the chaste life and "conversation" of the wives.*

The inference that Priscilla had in this way passed from the life of Roman ladies, such as it is depicted in the historians and satirists of the time, to Judaism or Christianity, is, of course, only hypothetical, but it seems to offer a better explanation than is commonly given of one rather noticeable fact. Twice, when St. Paul sends messages to the husband and the wife (Rom. xvi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 19), he places the name of the latter first. We may assume, if we like, that this was in consequence of her greater activity as a Christian worker, but there is nothing in the facts of the case to warrant that assumption. If, on the other hand, she was actually of higher birth than her husband, then, in those common formulæ of social usage which St. Paul never disregarded, her name would naturally take precedence. The Christians at Rome would talk of "Priscilla and Aquila," not of "Aquila and Priscilla," and St. Paul, writing to them or in the midst of them, would follow their example.

* Tacit. Ann. xiii. 32. Of this Pomponia the historian goes on to add that she lived for forty years after this trial, given up to a "gloomy devotion and a life of sorrow." If the interpretation given of her history be true, it follows that she must have witnessed as a Christian the martyrdom of St. Paul, and have been known personally to other members of the infant Church, to Aquila and Priscilla, to Claudia and Pudens.

Under these circumstances, then, the husband and wife, driven from Rome, find their way to Corinth. They open business as makers of the coarse canvas that was used for sails, or tents, or tarpaulins. The business was one which apparently called for the employment of many "hands." A stranger arrives at Corinth, who came from the country which was, in some sense, the home of the manufacture in question, and had given its name (*Cilicium* *) to one variety of the fabric. This is one point of contact. After what has been said, it will not seem strange to add, that there was also the other of their being like-minded in faith and hope. Coming, as St. Paul did, preaching that Jesus was the Christ, and that, because He was so, the special prerogatives of priests had passed away, he was scarcely likely to have been received as an inmate and a partner by one who held the Messianic claims of Jesus to be unfounded. As it was, they worked with him in a higher sphere of activity, and must have shared with him the enmity which led the Jews of Corinth to "oppose themselves and blaspheme." During the two years or more in which they thus laboured, they must have become familiar with every phase of his character and teaching. They, if any at Corinth, might be regarded as exponents of the Gospel which he preached. At some stage in their friendship (we cannot say positively whether at Corinth or Ephesus), in some popular outbreak they risked their own lives in order to save his (Rom. xvi. 4). When he left Corinth, probably after some special deliverance either from peril of this nature or from that of disease, and took upon

* The word was strictly applied to a cloth of goats' hair used for rugs, cloaks, and tent-coverings.

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himself accordingly the vow of the N xvi. 18), they would not separate the him, but went with him to Ephesus.

It lies in the nature of the case that brought together would converse much which each had most at heart. Aquila fail to tell the Apostle of the life of the Church which he had left at Rome, and the decree of Claudius, had been expelled Jewish members, and left, as it were, of the heathen converts. This intercourse the two explains what otherwise would be the language of St. Paul in writing to the Church, the fact that their "faith was throughout the whole world" (Rom. i. he had for a long time prayed "without for them; that for "many years" he had great desire" to visit them (xv. 23). The bright side of the picture may thus be that Jew of Pontus, so also the terrible view speak (Rom. i. 26—32) of the measurement of the heathen world may in part be report which he had given of the actual of that debasement in the social life of Rome.


The husband and wife are left at Ephesus on their missionary work, and they obtain with success. Their house becomes the place of one of the congregations of the (1 Cor. xvi. 19). They make converts, and organize a church. It seems a reference from the narrative of Acts xix Aquila possessed himself, and communicated to others, the special spiritual gifts of the the "tongues" and prophecy. As a result

instance of the kind of influence which they exercised there and elsewhere, we may take the history of their intercourse with Apollos. He had arrived at Ephesus in the same condition as the disciples just referred to, knowing the "baptism of John," believing Jesus to be the Messiah, not knowing the power of the Spirit, the universality of the Gospel, the freedom of the Gentiles from the law of Moses. He comes from one of the great seats of Jewish wisdom; he is himself eloquent and "mighty in the Scriptures." They welcome him, and fill up what was lacking. They hear his preaching in the synagogue, and then expound unto him the "way of the Lord" (Acts xviii. 26)—(the true path in which Christ was leading his people, that which led them to speak of themselves as "those of *the way*")—"more perfectly." A false stress has, perhaps, been sometimes laid on the humility of the Alexandrian teacher in thus submitting to be taught by a mere "tentmaker." Mechanical work of this kind was, it is well known, as in the case of St. Paul, compatible with the highest education, and with the position of a Rabbi in the Jewish, of an Apostle in the Christian, Church. What the history does indicate is, that Aquila and his wife possessed in a very high degree the gifts of "wisdom and knowledge," that they were thoroughly imbued with the teaching which at that time was characteristically Pauline, which became afterwards the faith of the whole Church of Christ. The "mysteries" which they had heard from St. Paul, the "form of sound words," the "whole counsel of God," the "traditions" which they had received from him, *i.e.*, as there seems reason to believe, the sum and sub-

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stance of the life and teaching of our Lord, they in their turn communicated to the Corinthians, and can hardly fail to trace their influence in the Church, that when he left Ephesus it was to go to Corinth, which they had so recently quitted, and which he had been left, it would seem, without any commanding authority. Their names had been prominent in the "letter of correction" which went in his behalf from the Church at Ephesus to that of Corinth.

They, however, remained at the former place. They were there when St. Paul returned to Ephesus after the two years and more in which he was absent. They were with him when tidings came that had sprung up in the church with which they had once been so closely connected. When he wrote to the Corinthians they send a message of greeting. But they must have left it almost at the same time as he did. He takes his departure from Ephesus, journeys through Macedonia, arrives at Corinth, stays there for the winter, writes while he is there to the Christians at Rome, and then (Romans 16) we find them at that city. The decree which had either been formally rescinded, or tacitly allowed to fall into disuse, and there had clearly been a recall back of Jews from all quarters; among them Jewish Christians whom St. Paul had met at Ephesus or at Corinth, and to whom he sends special messages of greeting. The affection which he had formed of his two "fellows" (he might so speak of them in both senses of the word) is expressed in words than which there can be stronger, nothing indicating more the sympathy with the mind of the Apostle.



he says, "not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles." And it is clear that their presence at Rome must have given a new impulse to the work that was going on there. The personal influence of Priscilla may probably be traced in the very large number of feminine names* in the list of those to whom the Apostle sends salutations, as already known to him, and with whom, therefore, he must have been brought into contact either at Ephesus or Corinth. In this way the new faith helped to gain a footing in the higher strata of society in Rome. The conversion of Pomponia, already referred to, of Claudia and Pudens (2 Tim. iv. 21), of those of Cæsar's household (Phil. iv. 22), may be noted as successive stages in the progress of the same work.†

* Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, the sister of Nereus, and Julia. The English reader may need to be reminded that Urbane is a masculine name.

† Among these early Christians of Rome, a special notice is due to those whom St. Paul mentions as "of the household of Narcissus" (Rom. xvi. 11). The more famous bearer of that name, the freedman and favourite of the Emperor Claudius, had been put to death by Nero, soon after his accession (A.D. 55); and if the words refer at all to him, it must be to the *familia* that he left behind him. There is, however, an inscription in the collections of Muratori (No. 1325) and Orelli (No. 720) which throws light upon this passage, and, so far as I know, has not yet been noticed in this connection. It was found at Ferrara, and purports to be a monumental tablet dedicated by Tiberius Claudius Narcissus to the *Menes* of his wife. And the name which the wife bore was Claudia Dicaeosynè (Righteousness). He speaks of her as "most devoted and most frugal" (*pientissima et frugalissima*). The two names which precede Narcissus justify us in ascribing it (with Orelli) to the time of Claudius or Nero. We are left in doubt as to its coming from the Narcissus, or another of the same name. Orelli is disposed to assign it to one of his freedmen. But the significant part of the inscription is the name of the wife. In the whole range of heathen and early Christian literature there is, I believe, but one other example of it. This is in a *Roman* inscription given in Gruter's collection (No. 887), and may, therefore, refer to the same person. Peace (*Irene*), Wisdom (*Sophia*), Mercy, Charity, have, in various forms, been chosen as Christian names, but not

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How long they continued at Rome is uncertain. But we may well believe Paul's earnest desire to visit the Christian city was in part traceable to his friendship with them, so the welcome which the Apostles met on his arrival, and for which he "thanked them" (Acts xxviii. 15), was due to their influence, if not to their actual presence. If they were at Rome at the time, we cannot doubt they would be among the brethren who met Paul at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns. There is, however, no trace of their acquaintance with the Apostle in the letters written during his first imprisonment. The mention of a few names of those of the "circumcision" who "been a comfort" to him in Col. iv. 11,

this. But it clearly belongs to the class of names which a Christian convert might naturally choose as significant. We may add that no ideal name would better answer the thought and feeling of one who had been brought under St. Paul's influence, as to the "righteousness which is of faith." The names which the husband recognises in her are precisely those which the women were exhorted to strive after, that their names should be "without the word be won by the conversation." Putting these facts together, it is, I think, but natural to suppose that we have here the Narcissus of whom St. Paul speaks, and his wife was one of those who were "in the Lord," and that Christian members of the *familia* found protection in her name, that she changed her name, at or soon after her conversion, to that which should be more in harmony with the Christian faith, and that in her case the husband was "won" by her simplicity. The occurrence, in close juxtaposition, of the names of Narcissus, of two names like Tryphæna and Tryphosa (each meaning Wanton), that might seem to have no connection, of women whose life had once been devoted to dissipation, makes it probable that this Diceosynè may have had a name like theirs, or even that she may have been a Christian. It is interesting to note in this connection the fact that the inscriptions recording the names of the imperial household, the *palatium* of Livia (see p. 355), the names of Tryphæna and Tryphosa both occur, the first in union with Claudia. (Philippians, p. 194.)

to imply that they had already left. When he writes, shortly before his death, the last letter extant to his beloved disciple, they are again at Ephesus. He includes them in the last greetings that he ever sent (2 Tim. iv. 19).

What circumstances led to this fresh change of residence we can, of course, only conjecture. The Jews of the "dispersion" were a migratory race, with little sense of a fixed home, now banished from Rome by a decree of the emperor, now driven from the cities in which they took refuge by popular outbreak, settling as strangers and pilgrims wherever they found a temporary shelter or an opening for their activity in trade. The movements of Aquila and Priscilla may have been determined by some such motives. There may have been, besides, the wish to return to a place in which they had many friends, to resume the work in connection with the Christian society of Ephesus, in which they had been so conspicuous. One fact, however, may throw some light on what must still remain doubtful. They are coupled in St. Paul's salutation with the household of Onesiphorus (2 Tim. iv. 19), and Onesiphorus (as we find from 2 Tim. i. 16) was an Asiatic Christian, who had gone to Rome during St. Paul's first imprisonment, and had "refreshed" the Apostle's spirit by hearty and ready sympathy—had "sought him" in the streets and lanes of the city, and at last had found him in the "hired house" in which he lived in military custody. The service which he then rendered was but the continuation of like acts of loyal friendship at Ephesus. He had been there, *i.e.*, at the time when Aquila and Priscilla were also there—opening their house as the meeting-place of the

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Church. Apparently when St. Paul wrote in which he names him, Onesiphorus was living. His prayer is primarily, "The mercy upon the household of Onesiphorus those who were dear to him for their faith then for the man himself, "that he may be of the Lord *in that day*"—the day of the Lord as the Judge of quick and dead. If this were so, then there would be, at least a defined reason which might have influenced his choice. His friend's death had left him in need of guidance and protection. If they were at Ephesus, they would be able to help those who were there themselves—not less than the ground they cared so much.

Beyond this all traces fail us. The traditions of Greek hagiography report no more than that they suffered martyrdom. They passed away in the fierce storm of persecution which fell upon the churches of Asia, at the time when Peter wrote his Epistles, and which had been foretold when the seer of Patmos wrote to them. There have been among those who having knowledge of living experience, what a true Apostle would be afterwards able to "try those who said they were apostles, and were not" (Rev. ii. 2). It is part of the purpose of the New Testament to give a complete biography of these men and others, even the highest, among the workers of the Apostolic Church. But it is well that we should acquiesce in this reticence of Scripture, and accept all that may be gained by coincidences and hints, and so to form a true estimate of the nature and extent of the work done by those

first sight seem least conspicuous, leaving behind them a name and nothing more. By such men or women as these, in a thousand instances, hardly less effectually than by Apostles and Evangelists, the foundations of the Church were made deep and wide. A man who could unite activity in outward business with zeal, devotion, open-handed liberality, a woman who united matron-like purity with spiritual discernment, and the capacity to teach others—these must have presented a striking contrast to the lives of the heathen round them, and been, wherever they were, as the “salt of the earth,” as “lights shining in the darkness.”

THE OLD AGE OF ST. PETER

THE life of the great Apostle, Lord of the Church assigned as at once characteristic and may be divided both naturally and conveniently, into four distinct periods. The last only forms the special subject of the present inquiry; but as it can hardly be treated except in its relations to the antecedent periods, it will be necessary so far to take a brief view of the others also.

(1.) Of the years, probably between thirty and forty, that preceded the preaching of the Gospel, we are told little or nothing, and are left to conjecture. Within certain limits there is little risk of error in the picture that suggests itself. The boyhood at Bethsaida (John i. 44), the experience of his father's calling: the experience of all

* The two occasions on which the name was so prominently used are both of them significant. First, when as yet he had not shown himself in accepting the testimony of Andrew, he "found the Christ," and coming for the first time to him, he was greeted with the strange words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," (John i. 42). When he had been led, this time through no human agency, by a direct apocalypse to the yet higher truth, the name was brought out, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. xvi. 13).

and perils of the fisherman's life, stormy nights, and labour often fruitless; intercourse with the peasants of the villages, and the publicans or *douaniers* of the towns of Galilee; visits, annual, or it may be more frequent, to the great feasts of Jerusalem; the weekly Sabbath service in the synagogue; this must have been his life, as it was that of the thousands that were living round him. Education there was probably none but of the most elementary character. When the two, Peter and John, stood before the Sanhedrim, those who listened wondered at their boldness, because "they were unlearned and ignorant men," had received, *i.e.*, no training like that which was given in the schools of Jerusalem (Acts iv. 13). It was, however, one great blessing of the synagogue system, one which was transmitted to the Christian Church, and has been perpetuated in our own parochial machinery, that it did provide even in the smallest village, wherever there were as many as ten householders, some means for raising the youth of Israel out of the brute ignorance in which the masses in heathen countries were left to live and die. The resident Rabbi was of necessity qualified to be a teacher, and often gathered the boys of the town into an actual school. Few were left in total ignorance of the law, which, at the age of twelve, every Jewish youth was bound to observe.* They learnt to repeat their *Shema*, the great creed of

* At this age, in the popular language of the Jews, after an examination in the elements of religious knowledge, they became *Children of the Law*, and shared with their parents in the observance of Jewish feasts. Our Lord's journey to Jerusalem, then apparently for the first time going up to Jerusalem, to keep the passover, and his "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions," give us the analogous stage in the unfolding of the perfect life.

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Israel: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our Lord." The verses written on their shields were committed to memory.* The Book of Numbers and the Proverbs of Solomon were the chief text-books of education. It was a natural case when the Apostle, speaking of a mixed marriage in a heated case, said emphatically, "From a child thou shalt love the Holy Scriptures daily" (2 Tim. iv. 13).

Of the events of St. Peter's life we know nothing; but we may surmise without error, that the wild insurrection of the Jews under Judas of Galilee (A.D. 6), in the taxation (Acts v. 37), dared to defy the power of Rome, must have stirred the feeling of patriotism in his childhood or early youth. One of these, probably a follower of Judas, we have in the number of the Twelve,† and to the hopes and dreams thus formed we may look for the origin of that longing expectation of "a kingdom restored to Israel," to which even the Apostle clung with so strange a tenacity (Acts i. 6). Consequently we may think of the companions

* The passages so written were the following:—

1. "Sanctify unto me all the first-born," &c. (Exod. xiii. 11—16).

2. "And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land," &c. (Deut. vi. 4—9).

3. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God," &c. (Deut. x. 20).

The ground of selection in the first three appears to be the occurrence of the words "they shall be as a sign upon thine hand," "frontlets between thine eyes." There is something striking and instructive in the fact that words from the Pentateuch were the weapons with which our Lord baffled the attacks of the Pharisees, and that they formed throughout the keynote of his teaching.

† Simon, called "Zelotes" (Luke vi. 16). The name accurately given as "Canaanite," in the Authorised Version of Matthew and St. Mark, means the same thing.

elder brother, Andrew ; of his marriage with some Galilean maiden, probably of his own rank in life ; of their purchase of a house in Capernaum, and, it may be, a small farm on the shores of the Sea of Galilee ; of the children prattling at their knees, the joy of their father's heart.* But above all, in those early years must have been laid the deep foundations of that friendship with the son of Zebedee, which lasted even to the end, and of which the Gospel of the beloved disciple bears so many traces.† The hot impetuosity of Simon, and the fiery energy of the Son of Thunder, must have drawn them together, as kindred natures are attracted to each other, and we can hardly doubt that they, sharing the restless fever of the time, looked for the Son of David, who was to come before long and claim his father's throne. Their words of joy at finding the Messiah, imply a long and yearning expectation (John i. 41).

(2.) With the preaching of the Baptist there came the first great change. The rumour spread that a great prophet had arisen ; and Simon, with other Galileans, chiefly, it would seem, those who shared his Messianic hopes, went to Bethabara, on the east side of Jordan, where John was baptizing (John i. 28). They were among the multitudes who, moved by

* This seems the natural inference from our Lord's answer to St. Peter's boast, "We have left all, and have followed thee," "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or *children*, or *lands*" (Mark x. 29). The marriage is more distinctly recorded Mark i. 30 ; Matt. viii. 14.

† The assumption that the feeling which shows itself in St. John's Gospel is one of poor rivalry and jealousy, is almost the most groundless as it is almost the most offensive hypothesis in M. Renan's "Life of Jesus." Such a thought could scarcely have commended itself to any one in whom the capacity for friendship had not been extinguished by sentimentalism.

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that strong, earnest preaching, confessed and plunged into the waters of the Jordan, leaving away the evil of their past deeds on a better life. What followed is familiar to every reader of the Gospel, and need not be repeated except in its leading outlines. To find the man who was greater than John, and to find the sign or wonder had been wrought, indeed the Christ,—to receive the new law from Peter, witness not of the strength he had, but of the work to which he was called, of the character that was needed for it,—to leave the old life, then to leave it, to leave, without abandoning, home, and wife and children, in order to take his place among the chosen of men,—to be led gradually out of the world and its poor ambitions to the true thought of God,—to take his place first within the Twelve, and among the Twelve to be numbered in the foremost rank, to pass into the innermost circle of the elect,—to be present with the chosen ones in the moment of highest glory on the Mount of the Transfiguration, and to undergo the deepest humiliation in the garden of Gethsemane, after those divine experiences, to forsake his Master through a coward fear, to be tortured by the tongues of Roman soldiers and Jewish scribes, to meet his Lord's reproachful yet forgiving words, and to rush into the dark, throw himself on the ground, and weep bitterly;—this was the life before him in the future which then opened before him. Through all these changes we see the true character of the man breaking out everywhere, his weakness showing its evil and its good. He is f

confession, and the first to retract ; he alone throws himself into the waves to join the loved Form that he saw through the darkness of the night, and then, his faith failing him, begins to sink ; prominent in all questionings and murmurings, impetuous, zealous, but also wavering and inconstant ; in years a man, but in character a wayward boy, needing the education of a Divine guide. That guidance was necessary to lead him to the true thoughts of God, and of the Kingdom, and of Christ ; it was needed also to prevent the friendship which had been the blessing of his life from passing into bitterness. Peter's question, "What shall we have therefore ?"—the prayer of the sons of Zebedee, that they might sit, one on their Lord's right hand, the other on his left, in his kingdom, the vexed displeasure to which that prayer gave rise,—all this gives tokens of a jealous rivalry which, but for the lesson which checked it, might have passed on into the bitterness which M. Renan traces, and may claim as the first discoverer, in the Gospel of the beloved disciple. But the lesson was learnt effectually. On the night of the last Supper their words and glances show the full confidence of friendship (John xiii. 24, 25). Peter, in the shame or confusion of his repentance, turns to John for help, and is not repelled. With him he must have spent the hours of that solemn Sabbath that followed the Crucifixion.* With him he went, as if

* The two had been together in Gethsemane. Both had gone, John taking Peter, into the High Priest's palace (John xviii. 15). John must have been cognisant of the denial, if not an actual witness of it ; and yet they are once again together, within less than two days, on the morning of the Resurrection. What passed between the two in that solemn interval which the Gospels shroud in silence we know not, but the inference that they must have been together is irresistible.

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after a midnight vigil, "very early in the morning" to the sepulchre in the garden. When the trial in the far future which is to be his is asserted love, and cancel, as it were, his repeated denial, he turns with eager expectation to the Lord, and what shall this man do (21).

(3.) The next period of the Apostle's life is of highest activity and fame. He is assigned to him as the spokesman of the Church, the holder of the Keys, binding and loosing, and retaining sins. The Spirit descends on the others. He shares with them the power of the Gift of Tongues, but he is conspicuous among the rest as the champion of that "goodly fellowship." The man who is in the porch of the High Priest's palace is abashed before the High Priest himself, the priests, elders, and scribes of the great Synagogue denounces their guilt, reasons with them on their own Scriptures. His voice we cannot but listen to in the Church with most reverence. His hands signs and wonders were wrought in the name of God's "holy servant,* Jesus." He cured their sick and laid them in the streets, he was the very "shadow of Peter," as he passed over them "overshadow some of them" (Acts 5:12-16). Still the old friendship lasts. Peter and Paul go together to the temple, together stand in the council. For a time, it may be, the Gentiles are brought into the Church by the ad-

* Not "child," as in the Authorised Version. It corresponds to "the Servant of the Lord" in Isaiah xliii. 10; lii. 13.

"Grecians," or Hellenistic Jews,* tended a little to diminish his influence. They could not feel the same confidence in the Galilean Apostle as had been felt by those who had seen and known him during the ministry of his Lord (Acts vi. 1); and the very fact that the whole brunt of the persecution raised by Saul fell not on him, but on Stephen (Acts vi. 9, 11), shows at once, both that there must have been a new element in the teaching of the latter, and that he must have occupied for the time a more commanding position among the preachers of the Faith even than the chief of the Apostles. The death of the great martyr, and the dispersion of the greater part of the disciples,† must have restored the old pre-eminence; and the work assigned to him in the history of Cornelius raised him to a position, if possible, yet more commanding. At Joppa, the great sea-port of the south of Palestine, where the crowd of sailors, traders, artisans of other nations, mingled with the Jewish population, living in the house of a man whose calling in the eyes of the stricter Jews was looked on as unclean, his thoughts may well have turned with hope, perplexity, and fear, to the wide Western Sea which spread out before him, and the vision which taught him to think of no man, circumcised or uncircumcised, as "common and unclean,"

* Not proselytes from Greek countries, but Jews who were settled in them, spoke Greek habitually, and used the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament. Contrasted with these in the Apostolic Church were the Hebrews, *sc.* the Jews of Palestine, who spoke only or chiefly the Aramaic or degenerate Hebrew of their own country.

† The fact that the Apostles remained at Jerusalem during this crisis, and could remain safely, while it was in part a proof of their courageous love, shows also that, in some way or other, their teaching was not so directly antagonistic to the system of the Pharisees as that of Stephen had been.

THE OLD AGE OF ST. PAUL

gave him the guidance which he needed in another sense than that which men would give to the words, he had the keys of the Kingdom, and, thus taught, he opened the door to the Gentiles, so wide that no man, even he himself, could shut it. It was to be the human instrument of the faith of the Gentile as well as of the Jewish Church, rather than the Romish sense, the Catholic Communion of Saints, the Universal Church of Believers, may look to him as to the foundation on which its Lord has built it.

(4.) It would be interesting with some interest to trace step by step the history of the events that followed, but here our materials are scanty. We see him indeed exposed to the persecution which, under the revived monarchy of Agrippa, and the consequent ascendency of the Sadducees' faction, attacked the Apostles who hitherto escaped. We watch what is the first step in a life of missionary work, more probably of a falling back for a moment to a shelter of a hiding-place. Obviously the first fact, or rather series of facts, in them which we should watch the unfolding with absolute interest, would be the relation between them and the names whose names are foremost in that great Church's history, between the one who is known as the "greatest," and him who is to be thought of as the "least" of the Apostles (1 Cor. xv. 9). Contrasted in many ways, undoubtedly were from the first. On his youth and manhood spent in the room of a fisherman and the peasant; on the

struction of the schools of Tarsus, and the full training of a scribe in those of Jerusalem, sitting at the feet of Gamaliel: on the one side, as far as we can gather, a frame indicating strength and energy, a stature that commanded respect, a voice clear and powerful (Acts ii. 14); on the other, a "bodily presence weak," and "a speech contemptible" (2 Cor. x. 10). On the one side, again, not the claim only, but the actual possession of a fuller knowledge of the teaching of Christ on earth, through three years of close companionship; on the other, not the claim only but the actual possession of a fuller knowledge of the mind of Christ as the Lord and Teacher of His Church. In the early stages, however, the contrast did not pass into any real, or even apparent antagonism. In spite of the distrust of the disciples he received the persecutor Saul into his house, as a brother in the faith (Gal. i. 18). Fourteen years afterwards (years of which we know absolutely nothing of his life), when the work of Paul was already coming to be known as wider and mightier than his own, he was found still faithful to the lesson which the history of Cornelius had taught him. In the great controversy whether circumcision, and with it the whole yoke of Judaism, was to be imposed on the Gentile converts, he gave no grudging or half-hearted support to the cause of which Paul was the great leader, extended to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, brought forward his own experience, and entered his protest against the Judaizing party, as putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which the Jewish Christians themselves and their fathers had been unable to bear (Acts xv.; Gal. ii.).

THE OLD AGE OF ST. . .

Between the council at Jerusalem and the probable date of the Epistles, our knowledge is scantier and dimmer. St. Paul is the central figure in the Church's work, and all others of the Apostles, fall into the background. There we get glimpses of work limited partly by his acceptance of the "Gentile Circumcision" as his special trust (Col. ii. 11), partly also by the fact that in his journeys he was accompanied by his wife—like him young, and unequal, we may well think of more perilous and laborious journeys than the activity of St. Paul.* Another hindrance, ever, was at work only too successfully to prevent at once to give him a spurious prominence, to reduce him, so far as it operated, to insignificance. The converted Pharisees, who turned their Phariseeism into the Church of Christ (Acts xv. 5), the Judaizing party who dogged the steps of St. Paul at every turn, slandered his character for truth and purity and common honesty (2 Cor. i. 17; vii. 2; v. 11; Gal. i. 10), undoing, as far as it was possible, to undo, his work, were at this time making efforts to claim St. Peter as their leader. From that section of the Church appealed to at Corinth, speaking in the name of the Church, claiming themselves to be special delegates with extraordinary power, from the fact

* May we not trace an unconscious embodiment of this experience in the words which bid husbands to "give unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel?" (1 Peter iii. 7; cf. Eph. v. 23).

† "The very chiefest Apostles." There is a reference in the phrase—"the envoys extraordinary" of the Council at Jerusalem (2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11).

Twelve. It was easy to represent this recognition of the Church of the Circumcision as the region of his own activity as showing a want of sympathy with St. Paul's work among the Gentiles, his own adherence to the customs of Moses as a protest against the conduct of one who became to those that were "without the Law," as "without the Law" himself. So accordingly it was that the cry, "I am of Cephas," was heard among the watchwords of wild debate at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 12). It lies in the nature of all party warfare, that those who thus used his name would try to force him into accepting the position which they thus assigned to him. They would repeat to him every slander against the rival teacher, which they circulated among the churches. He would hear as James heard, that the Apostle of the Uncircumcision was not only proclaiming to the Gentiles their freedom in the Gospel, but was going beyond the limits marked out by the Synod of Jerusalem, "teaching all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after their customs" (Acts xxi. 21). It would not be difficult for them, by tearing words from the context of thought, or acts from the context of the life, to justify the charge. He had said repeatedly and emphatically, that "circumcision was nothing" (1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6; vi. 15), that the Law tended to increase sin (Gal. iii. 19; Rom. iii. 20; v. 20; vii. 7). He had taught men (here, as it might be argued, in direct contravention of the decrees of the Council), that they might without scruple, except in one special case, eat of things sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. x. 27, 28).

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It was natural that such resolution should have some result, and for its effect was that of placing the two groups on a real, as well as seeming, antagonism. At some period, probably two or three years after their meeting at Jerusalem, and St. Peter came from Antioch on his second missionary journey. In order, it may be, to fill up the gap after the departure of so many teachers (Peter, Silas, Mark), Peter came down to the city which was, as it were, the mother of all the churches of the Gentiles, as Jerusalem was of all the churches of the Jews. At that city the disciples had the name which has since risen to such glory, but which was then comparatively unknown, which was never used by the disciples or by the unbelieving Jews of the time. The name does not occur once in the whole text of the Acts of St. Paul.* The question which was now before him was whether he would find in that new name a tie of brotherhood than that of Abraham, or whether he fall back within the old barriers, behind the wall of partition. At first he was consistent. He acted as the vision of Joppa and Cornelius had taught him to act. He mingled with the common man common and unclean. He mingled with the Gentile Christians, entered into their homes, shared their meals, partook of their

* "The disciples were called *Christians* (Acts xi. 26). It was natural, therefore, that persecution to which the Church was exposed upon the name so given, and in St. Peter's words, *suffer as a Christian*, let him not be ashamed" (1 Pet. ii. 12). We may see the natural result of that residence in Antioch, when we learn neither from his own Epistles nor yet from the Acts, nor from St. Paul's incidental mention of it in Gal.

of charity, united with these feasts the higher Supper of the Lord (Gal. ii. 12). But the Judaizing party, with the reckless and restless tenacity which marked their policy, were determined to counteract this protest against their own exclusiveness. Whether those who came as delegates from James were abusing his name as they had done once before (Acts xv. 24; Gal. ii. 12), or whether they had so far worked on him as to draw from him the expression of some wish, forgetting the different circumstances of the two churches, that Peter at Antioch would follow the same line of action as he was following at Jerusalem, we do not know. In either case it might have been plausibly argued that there was no inconsistency with the decrees of the Council, that the Gentile converts were left free to do as they liked in all things morally indifferent, that the Law was recognised as binding upon Jews only. The result of the argument, and of the real or alleged authority of James, was to throw Peter into a state of melancholy vacillation. The scene in the gateway of the High Priest's palace was acted over again, and the Apostle who had been bold before the danger came, or when backed by a numerous following, shrank from standing alone against the violence and yells and anathemas of the Judaizers. "Fearing them of the circumcision, he separated himself," and by that single act undid his former work, went backwards to a standing-ground that he had forsaken, built again the things that he had destroyed, helped, so far as in him lay, to make the chasm between the Jewish and Gentile Churches wider and more lasting.

Such was the position of the two parties at Antioch when Paul arrived there, probably during the jour-

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ney briefly mentioned but not narrate 22.* He saw at once, with his wealth of insight, all that was at stake, and more, as before in the case of Titus, "subjection, no, not for an hour" (Gal. so would have been to acquiesce in a of his own conduct, to sanction a line between the Jewish and Gentile Church the glorious reality of a Church brotherhood of mankind in Christ, an ideal. He found public feeling outside limits of the party which St. Peter was with the Church, strongly against him it would seem, had as yet ventured to open opposition to the Apostle to whom the kingdom of heaven had been entrusted upon whom the Church was to be so skilfully had the faction played its ing here at least to recognise the Gentile believers, and taking their stand had agreed to as a compact, that even was carried away with their dissimulation 13). Unconscious of any inconsistency priding himself on returning to the that he had occupied before, he too was those with whom he had lived previous bonds of brotherhood. It was a crisis in the spirit of an Athanasius or a Luther spirit was found in St. Paul. Regarding

* On this hypothesis, more probable in itself than came fresh from Jerusalem, better informed perhaps to the real wishes and feelings of St. James, at which he dwells so emphatically in Gal. ii. 13, comparatively recent date, and still fresh in his mind

† Not, as in the Authorised Version, "because blamed," but "because he had been condemned."

prestige of authority that gathered round the great name of Peter, regardless for the time, though not forgetful, of the great work which he had done for the Church of Christ, he "withstood him to the face before all." He and those who acted with him were "not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel" (Gal. ii. 14); were dwelling on the words of a compact with the hair-splitting dexterity of casuists, not entering into the heart and spirit of the life of brotherhood in Christ. With sharp burning words he pressed home the charge of inconsistency against the great Apostle. "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews" (Peter continued, it would appear from this, to adhere to the letter of the vision at Joppa, while he lost sight of its significance, eating meats which the Jew would look on as unclean, yet shrinking from the society of the uncircumcised as polluting, or at least unfitting for him), "why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" This was the real question at issue. It was easy to say that the Gentiles were left free, that the yoke of the Law was not imposed on them; but in reality they were brought under a coercion of the most stringent kind. They were practically told that the adoption of Judaism was the condition of their communion with the Church of the Apostles. Without this, there might indeed be a formal recognition of their membership in the Church, but practically they would be treated still as members of a different and inferior body, still outside the barrier, still as "heathens and publicans."

What followed this startling antagonism between the two great preachers of the faith, what other

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scenes brought the great drama of St. Peter towards its conclusion, we know not. of St. Luke as to the contest itself, a whole period of St. Peter's history to be longed, is every way significant. We, friend and companion of St. Paul, he would well believe, what that teacher would write,—would not dwell on the momentary weakness and inconsistency of the Apostle, but had been set up in rivalry with him, would rather seek to show how it had been given to open the door of faith unto the Gentiles, and how he had been a chief instrument in assuring the triumph of the Gospel. The Acts of the Apostles do not give us any full record of the work of St. Peter. Their labours, journeyings, martyrdoms are shrouded in the dim uncertainties of tradition. We have the Acts of St. Peter and St. Paul, and even the Epistles, only enough to enable us to see how, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, in spite of temporary estrangement, they were of heart and mind, joined in a brotherhood.

Beyond this, then, our knowledge of *St. Peter* is traditional and conjectural. All we can do is to compare the traditions and hints dropped unconsciously in the various sources, to see how far the one confirm the other, to delineate the salient points in the closing years of his life that thus comes to stand out clear from the darkness.

(1.) There is a probability indefinitely at some period subsequent to the scene of the Acts, St. Peter found his way, journeying probably through the provinces of Asia, to the great In

There, still accompanied by his wife, and by the disciple who was as his own son by adoption, still true to his calling as the Apostle of the Circumcision, he preached to his brethren of the stock of Abraham, and became not indeed the founder, but in part the organizer of the Roman Church. Difficult as it is to arrive at chronological accuracy, it seems probable that we may ascribe the journey through the Asiatic churches to the period of two years and upwards of St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea and at Rome, and his arrival at the latter city between St. Paul's first and second imprisonments. Neither the Acts of the Apostles nor St. Paul's Epistles, nor yet St. Peter's, give any trace of the two having met again. Once, however, it may be they did meet, or, stranger and more touching still, knew of each other's presence in the Imperial city, perhaps in the same prison, without meeting. There, as the old legend tells, Peter, seeking to escape the pressing danger, passing out of the gate of Rome upon the Appian Way, saw in vision the same face that had once before turned and looked upon him in the High Priest's palace, and turned back with a new confidence to bear his testimony unto the death.* There, as he passed to the place of execution, "girded" by another's hand, and carried "whither he would not" (John xxi. 18), he turned to the wife who had been so long the faithful sharer of all the chances and changes of his life, and bade her be of good cheer as being an heir together with him of

* The legend may possibly find a partial confirmation in 2 Peter i. 14. The life of St. Paul gives us repeated instances of this personal manifestation of the Lord's presence (Acts xviii. 9; xxii. 18; xxiii. 11). St. John had a like vision in Patmos (Rev. i. 13). Was it strange that the same should be given to St. Peter?

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the grace of life. There sentenced
Roman citizen like St. Paul, but as
factor, he too was crucified, choosing
runs, which art has made familiar,
the cross, not as his Lord had been
head downwards.

The Epistles confirm much that
reports to us. "She that is at Ba
you" (1 Peter v. 13). Of the three vie
been taken of this passage, that whi
far the strongest grounds is that
"Babylon" not the old half-desolat
Euphrates, nor a town of the same na
but the mystical name of Rome. Th
the Apocalypse shows how familiar
meanings were, how natural it wou
Asiatic Christians to understand that by
the new Babylon, the mistress of the
xiv. 8; xvi. 19; xvii 8).^{*} If, as se
enough, we see in the Revelation of
great ingathering of prophecies and vi
before been presented singly, we may
that St. Peter's use of the word wa
He taught the believers of the dispersio
the Jewish converts, to look forward to
upon the city of the Cæsars as searchi
whelming as that which had broken

* So in later Rabbinic writings Edom is the re
for Rome, possibly because Babylon had been p
were, by Christian writers. So, even in the ti
prophecies against the historical Babylon were
strange use of cipher-writing, through the othe
name of Sheshach (Jer. xxv. 26; li. 41). So also
the prophetic name for Egypt (Ps lxxxvii. 4;
li. 9: and (in the Hebrew) xxx. 7); and Jare
Assyria (Hos. v. 13; x. 6).

monarchy of the Chaldæans. In this case, therefore, we have in the Epistle what coincides with the tradition; and the mention, not of *the Church** but of *the woman that was elect, with those to whom she sends her greeting*, adds yet another link. She, her husband's companion in travel, might well send a salutation to those whom she had known, whose wives and daughters she had probably taught to aspire after a higher and purer life, to whom she had presented a type of womanhood as yet new and strange to them.† The mention of Mark, whom St. Paul's Epistles show to have been at Rome during his first imprisonment (Col. iv. 10; Philemon 24), and of Silvanus, his friend and fellow-worker, not under the Hebrew name by which Peter had once known him (Acts xv. 22, 23), but under its new Latinised form, leads to the same conclusion.

(2.) To this period of his life also we may assign, without much risk of error, the work which a very early tradition ascribes to him of putting on record, through St. Mark's help as an interpreter and amanuensis, what he remembered and thought it right to publish of his Lord's work and teaching. To trace the internal evidence of that origination of the Gospel which bears St. Mark's name—to show the signs of a vividness of perception and the touches of graphic power which indicate the testimony of an eyewitness, before whose mind the old past was living once again—to point out the hundred points of contact between that Gospel and the Epistles of St. Peter

* The word "Church," as the italics show, is interpolated by the translators.

† Here again, as before, we are free to trace a personal element in 1 Peter iii. 1—7.

—might well form the subject of a
 Here we can only point to words in the
 fall in with the tradition, as indica
 like the purpose which was in this
 into effect. These we find in close c
 his recollections of the past, of the
 Mount of Transfiguration, of the last
 on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. (C
 we have the words, "I will not be n
you in remembrance of these things.
 think it meet, as long as I am in this
 stir you up *by putting you in remen*
 further, "Moreover I will endeavour
 able after my decease to *have these th*
brance" (2 Peter i. 12—15). Would n
 ripen naturally into act, and lead hi
 record the acts and words which woul
 vince others, as they had convinced
 had not followed "cunningly devised

(3.) But at some time or other in th
 life we must think of him as coming i
 the first time with what must have be
 sure of wisdom and knowledge, equiva
 a new apocalypse of truth. During th
 or so that had passed since the convers
 Tarsus, the two, as we have seen, ha
 met. True, he had once heard in bri
 substance of the Gospel which St. Pau
 the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 2). True, he
 recognised his teaching and his work ;
 there had been an interval of separation
 for a time, of actual antagonism, brow
 we have seen, by ignorance and misr
 During all those years, the only time

listened to St. Paul's voice was when it spoke in sharp reproof at Antioch. We have no reason to think it likely that any of St. Paul's Epistles had at that time come within his reach. But two indeed of those now extant were then written. But now, in his old age, he came in contact with Silvanus, who for years had been St. Paul's companion, who was joined with him in the salutations to the churches of Thessalonica, who possibly acted as his amanuensis in writing the Epistle to the Romans.* From him, therefore, Peter may well have obtained a copy of some at least of the great Epistles in which the teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles has come down to us for an everlasting possession.† Can we not picture to ourselves the flood of new feelings and thoughts which would rush in upon his soul as he sat and read them? Delight to find a heart that beat so entirely in unison with his own, loving Christ as he himself loved Him, a truth essentially the same, though presenting here and there different phases, and including "some things hard to be understood,"—a new warmth of affection towards the "beloved brother Paul," who, when they last met, had reproved him so sharply—wider thoughts, it may be, than he had before known as to the mystery of Christ and the hidden symbolism of the types and shadows of the Law,—all these are traceable in his Epistles; and this also, *the influence of the*

* Tertius, equivalent in meaning to the Hebrew Silas, has been by some writers identified with Silvanus (Rom. xvi. 22).

† Possibly also of some that have not come down. We have no Epistle from St. Paul to the Churches of Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, yet St. Peter speaks of letters written to them. The extant Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians treat but scantily of the subjects in connection with which he mentions St. Paul's teaching (2 Peter iii. 15).

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teaching of St. Paul on the mind of
well repay a distinct and full inquir

(4.) Lastly, we must not forget th
which he visited he would come un
of men speaking by special inspira
dwelling fully and in burning words
that were coming on the Church a
that were to follow,—glories wh
certain in the far horizon, and whic
near and coming quickly, as men co
quickness. One who heard such
again, and was persuaded of their
remain indifferent to them ; and ye
that words true in themselves migh
minds unfounded hopes, and so exp
appointment and derision. It was
in the last words of counsel whic
sent forth to his brother elders, to
as to the nature, office, limits of
word."

With such fruits fresh gathered i
his old age, with a mind illumined
experience and by the guidance
Truth, soaring far above the strife
with which faction and party had s
his name, looking back upon the
when his Lord had been with him
he saw His glory and listened to H
forward to the time as already
would have to put off his taberna
had showed him,—all the fear an
self-confidence of the natural man,
jona, having passed away,—the tr
worthy of his name, sends forth the

Epistles which were then the stay and bulwark of the Church against the hosts of dark and dangerous errors, and which continue to give light to all seekers after truth, and comfort to all penitents and mourners.

THE END.





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